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FIFTEENTH-CENTURY SECULAR PROSE

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In 1931 Professor R. W. Chambers and Dr. E. V. Hitchcock produced for the Early English Text Society an edition of Nicholas Harpsfield's *Life of Sir Thomas More*, and to this edition Professor Chambers added a long 'Introduction on the Continuity of English Prose from Alfred to More'. His essay was immediately recognized as a work of the first importance, and its general survey of our prose from the earliest times onwards was conducted with that easy competence of which he was a master. In the course of his argument he corrected many false assumptions and did much to rehabilitate writers and periods for long in disfavour. Among such periods was the so-called 'weak' and 'futile' fifteenth century. He showed it to be 'a time when English prose recovers from the consequences of the Norman Conquest', when it was established 'as the proper medium, not only for history, but for many other things', and when 'secular prose is found everywhere'.

For all this we are greatly in his debt. The sections which deal with the fifteenth century have much in them that is new or corrective, yet in their insistence on the importance of religious and homiletic prose are perhaps a little unfair to secular prose. It is not difficult to see how this state of affairs has been brought about. Professor Chambers's whole cast of thought inclined him to delight in the religious prose which in the fourteenth, and increasingly in the fifteenth, centuries appeared in the vernacular. He rightly saw that the main stream could not flow through the prose of Pecock, Fortescue, or Malory. Important as these are in the full story of our prose, they do not help us to understand which way it was moving. It would be nearer the truth to look on them as backwaters, or inland lakes which we may admire for their many beauties, but which do not feed the main stream. This main stream Dr. Chambers felt ran 'strongest and deep-

est through the channel of our religious literature'. And he was right. No one would be so foolish as to ignore or under-estimate the contribution made by such writers as Rolle, Hilton, Wycliffe in the fourteenth, and a host of known and unknown writers in the fifteenth, centuries. The sheer bulk of such work still surviving in thousands of manuscripts is evidence enough of their part in developing and popularizing the use of vernacular prose. But while this may readily be allowed, it is also right to insist that a very considerable contribution was made by writers of secular prose, and that Professor Chambers did not allow sufficiently for this in his survey.

Any consideration of the fortunes of English prose in the fifteenth century must begin by noting that its opening decades saw an end of the long battle between the English and the French languages for the literary mastery. 'English for the English', was henceforth the winning cry, and a great deal of evidence might be produced to show how the vernacular was more and more taking the place of Latin or French. Henry V began to write his official letters in English, and with some hesitation the City of London followed suit. Petitions, wills, gild certificates, confessions, presentments by juries, sworn statements, instructions, proclamations, letters, ordinances, etc., appear in ever swelling numbers. City Companies began to keep their records in English; city and town records forsook their time-honoured Latin; medical and herbal remedies and culinary recipes were set out in an English form; in short, after 1420, or thereabouts, the vernacular output becomes a flood.

Here then was a good beginning, and the history of secular prose throughout the century shows how the vernacular responded to the many demands made upon it. Something of this has already been shown in the pages of this Review (*R.E.S.*, xix, pp. 113-19), while elsewhere (*M.L.R.*, xxxix, pp. 1-8) a detailed account has been given of the 'use of the vernacular for prose of science and information. If its ubiquity and variety may be taken for granted, it remains to be shown how successfully it was used, and what claims it has to be considered side by side with religious prose in the story of 'the continuity of English prose'.

First we may distinguish between the prose of the ordinary man using prose for practical purposes, official or personal, with little thought of any but a limited audience, and the prose of men writing for a wider circle of readers. For both these groups, however, one great obstacle was removed when the balance of opinion turned in favour of a prose 'clear, easy and plain to know', and away from an ornate prose, 'honorably enlarged and adorned', as it was said to be—a prose analogous to that elaborate type of poetry practised by Lydgate, Hawes, and many other fifteenth-century writers.

Professor Chambers noted this danger of elaboration, and his quota-

tions from the letters of the City of London (c. 1418) and from the Brewer's Book (1422) are striking evidence of this way of writing.¹ About the same time, Lydgate was writing prose such as the following:

Whilome, as olde bookis make mention, when tholde noble famous Cite of Rome was most shynyn in his felicitye and flowring in his glory,—liche as it is remembered in bookis of olde antiquyte,—the prime temps of his fundacioun, whenne the wallis were reised on heithe bi the many & prudent diligence of Remvs and Romvlus . . .²

Prose, with much to say, since it was taking all accessible knowledge for its province, managed to steer fairly clear of this disastrous way of writing, and this is clearly seen in the prose of the ordinary man of the fifteenth century, for in this century, as perhaps nowhere else for many hundreds of years, we can see what powers of handling the language were possessed by all that variety of men and women who used the pen mainly to state their business or pleasure, and whose letters are enshrined in such great fifteenth-century correspondences as those of the Pastons, the Stonors, and the Celys. They deal with every kind of topic: descriptions of riots, forays and executions; requests for money, books, cookery utensils, or wives; accounts of legal proceedings and unsuccessful bribery; of attempts to hold courts, execute distrains, engage servants; descriptions of possible brides, of weddings, of feasts, of journeys, of family disagreements, of national events or of local disasters—in short, everything that formed part of medieval life. All these things are related in a vivid, unaffected prose that seems to owe little to Professor Chambers's models. Take, for example, the scene at Hellesdon Manor Court in 1478. The Duke of Suffolk was full of spleen against Paston, and

by hys beryng ther that daye ther was never no man that playd Herrod in Corpus Crysty play better and more agreable to hys pageant then he dud. But ye shall understand that it was after none, and the weder hot, and he so feble for sekenes that hys legges wold not bere hym, but ther was ij men had gret payn to kepe hym on hys fete; and ther ye were juged. Som sayd, 'Sley'; som sayd, 'Put hym in prison.' And forth com my lord, and he wold met you with a spere, and have none other mendes for the troble at ye have put hym to but your hart blod, and that he will gat with hys owen handes.³

Or we may take this letter from Thomas Bradbury, a London mercer, with its suave reasoning as to the ultimate economy of taking the best:

Madame, the sarcenet is very ffyne. I thynte most profytable and most worshipfull for you, and shall [last] you your lyff and your chyldes after you, wher as harlatry of xl.d. or xliij.d. a yerd wold nat indure too sesons with you: Therfor for a lytill more cost, me thinketh most wysdom to take of the best. In certen I have bought the most part of the sarcenet, for I had nat I-now to perfourme yt. I wyne never a peny in that.⁴

¹ Chambers, *op. cit.*, pp. cxii and cxvi.

² *The Serpent of Division*, ed. H. N. MacCracken, 1911, p. 49.

³ *Paston Letters*, ed. J. Gairdner, 1901, No. 817.

⁴ *Stonor Letters*, No. 252 (Camden Society, 1919).

Many other letters, such as Thomas Betson's playful letter to his little friend,¹ or the description of the execution of the Duke of Suffolk at sea² might be quoted in support of the view that by the middle of the century a tradition of what constituted good secular prose was in being. And if such be the case when we speak of the familiar correspondence of these 'amateur' writers, we may expect to find those who hoped for a wider circulation for their work exercising an even greater ability in their medium.

This is what we find in the work of such writers as William Thorpe and Margery Kempe. Thorpe's writing, in the main, is an account (written many years after the event) of his examination for heresy before the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1407. It gives a remarkably clear and vivid account of the interview, setting out in dialogue form the thrust and parry of the disputants, and exhibits Thorpe's command of his pen in the careful expositions he gives of his theological beliefs. Here great nicety of expression was essential if he was to save his life, and his successful emergence from the ordeal is a testimony, both to him and to the resources of the prose in which he conducted his argument. The following may serve as an example.

And the Archbishop asked me, 'What was Holy Church?' And I said, 'Sir, I told you before, what was Holy Church: but since ye ask me this demand, I call Christ and his saints, Holy Church.' And the Archbishop said unto me, 'I wot well that Christ and his saints are Holy Church in heaven; but what is Holy Church in earth?' And I said, 'Sir, though Holy Church be every one in charity; yet it hath two parts. The first and principal part hath overcome perfectly all the wretchedness of this life, and reigneth joyfully in heaven with Christ. And the other part is here yet in earth, busily and continually fighting, day and night, against temptations of the Fiend, forsaking and hating the prosperity of this world, despising and withstanding their fleshly lusts; which only are the pilgrims of Christ, wandering towards heaven by steadfast faith, and grounded hope, and perfect charity.'³

Not only was his prose sufficient for this purpose, but it could also take a lively turn:

I know well that when divers men and women will go thus after their own wills, and finding out one pilgrimage, they will ordain with them beforehand to have with them both men and women that can well sing wanton songs; and some other pilgrims will have with them bagpipes: so that every town that they come through, what with the noise of their singing, and with the sound of their piping, and with the noise of their Canterbury bells, and with the barking out of dogs after them, they make more noise than if the King came there away, with all his clarions and many other minstrels. And if these men and women be a month out in their pilgrimage, many of them shall be, a half year after, great janglers, tale-tellers and liars.⁴

¹ *Stonor Letters*, No. 166.

² *Paston Letters*, No. 93.

³ *Fifteenth Century Prose and Verse*, ed. A. W. Pollard, 1903, p. 128. Spelling modernized and taken from Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

Margery Kempe, the Lynn mystic, was not herself able to write, but there can be little doubt that her autobiography was taken down at her dictation, and that it conveys her own way of expressing herself. In common with those of her time and class she used a homely, vivid style of speech, which produced phrases such as 'that wicked worm, Wiclif', or proverbs such as 'many men speken of Robyn Hood, and shoote neuere his bowe', or led her to tell an opponent that 'thou wost no more what thou blabereest than Balamis asse'. A more extended passage shows her quality:

As the sayd creatur was in a chirch of Seynt Margaret to sey hir deuocions, per cam a man knelyng at hir bak, wrynyng hys handys & shewyng tokenys of gret heuynes. She, parceyuynge hys heuynes, askyd what hym eyld. He seyde it stod ryth hard wyth hym, for hys wyfe was newly delyueryd of a childe & sche was owte hir mende. '&, dame', he seyth, 'sche knowyth not ne me ne non of hir neyborwys. Sche roryth & cryith so pat sche makith folk euyl afferd. Sche wyl bope smytyn & bityn, & perfor is sche manylcylde on hir wristys.'¹

There were not many Thorpes or Kempes perhaps, but the mass of wills, civic records, books of the chase, of gardening, of physic and the like all show that English prose could express the everyday commonplaces, desires and requirements of the people, and in some hands could do even more.

But prose had to give expression to something more than these straightforward practical ends, for not only had it to convey the religious and homiletic ideas of which Professor Chambers speaks, but also it had to cope with philosophical, historical, scientific, and informational matters which the century produced. So while we must note religious and homiletic prose such as Love's *Mirror*, or Capgrave's *Life of St. Gilbert*, or *Jacob's Well*; or collections of pious tales and *exempla* such as the *Gesta Romanorum*, or the *Legenda Aurea*, at the same time we must not fail to note the works of philosophical interest written by Pecock, or the vernacular histories such as the *Brut*, or Capgrave's *Chronicle*, while scientific treatises from translations of Lanfrank's *Science of Chirurgie* to the briefest summary of John of Bordeaux's plague pamphlet put new problems before the user of prose. Add to these, treatises on hunting, hawking, or the care of horses; on travel and pilgrimages; or vast compilations such as Trevisa's translation of Bartholomew's *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, and something of the volume of secular prose that the century produced is evident.

Its quality, as might be expected, was various. In some cases the sentence structure is comparatively simple, and the paragraph is built up by a series of loosely related sentences. Thus in Mandeville's *Travels* we read endlessly sentences such as:

And all be it pat men fynden gode dyamandes in Ynde, 3it natheles men fynden hem mor comounly vpon the roches in the see, and vpon hilles where the

¹ *The Book of Margery Kempe* (E.E.T.S., No. 212; 1940), Vol. 1, p. 177.

myne of gold is. And þei growen many togedre, on lytill, another gret. And þer ben . . . And þei . . .¹

The development of such a prose may be seen in the *Brut*. While it is true, as Professor Chambers remarks, that the siege of Rouen is told 'in doggerel rhyme', this is to ignore the more important fact that for the main part the *Brut* is written in a clear narrative prose, such as the passage which precedes 'the doggerel':

They [the citizens of Rouen] preyd hym to telle hys name. And he seid, 'my name ys Vmfreuyle'; and þei thankid God and oure Lady that thei had mette with hym, for he was of the old blode of that contre of Normandye; 'and we praye you to helpe vs haue an ende betwene youre Kyng and vs.' And he seid, 'what is youre wille?' and thei seid at fewe wordis: 'we haue byn at euyry porte of the City there these Pryncis loggyn before, and haue callid aftur speche of hem; but we coude haue non ansuere.'²

Dr. Chambers regrets that 'these Englishmen of the early Fifteenth Century' had lost 'the restrained narrative prose which the Chroniclers had in the days of Edward the Confessor', but did he allow sufficient credit to many passages in the *Brut*,³ such as the above, which do not seem without merit as narrative?

Apart from narrative, prose had much to accomplish in other fields. Scientific writings in the vernacular were well-nigh unknown before the fifteenth century, but John of Arderne, or the anonymous translators of John of Bordeaux or of Lanfrank of Milan were able to express themselves clearly, as the following will show:

A mannys knee is symtyme out of ioyncte, & sumtyme þe round boon þat is þervpon goiþ out of his place. Signys whanne a mannes knee is out of ioyncte ben open ynow3 & if þe round boon be out of his place, þou miȝte liztlich knowe it. In þis maner þou schalt bringe a mannes knee into his ioynct aȝen. Lete a strong man holde faste his hiȝe, and anoper man his leg & þou schalt wiþ þin hondis presse faste þe boon into his propre place & if þe place be empostymed; first þou muste do awei þe empostym, & þan bringe þe knee into his place aȝen. If the round boon . . .⁴

Or again, take the following passage from a treatise of 'Fishing with an angle':

For yf he fayl of on [fish] he may not faylle of a noper yf he do as thys tretes folowys schall ynforme hym, but yf þer ben non yn þe watur wer he schall angul. And zet at þe leste he schall haue hys holsom walke & mery at hys own ease, and also meny a sweyt eayr of dyuers erbis & flowres þat schall make hyt ryȝt hongre & well disposud in hys body. He schall heyr þe melodies melodious of þe Ermony of bryde; he schall se also þe zong swannys & signetes folowynȝ þer Eyrouns; Duckes, Cootes, herons & many oper fowlys with þer

¹ Mandeville's *Travels* (E.E.T.S., No. 153; 1919), p. 105.

² The *Brut* (E.E.T.S., No. 131, 136; 1906-8), p. 404.

³ See for examples, the *Brut*, pp. 303, 494, 553.

⁴ Lanfrank's *Science of Cirurgie* (E.E.T.S., No. 102; 1894), p. 327.

brodys, wych me semyt better þen all þe noyse of houndes, & blastes of hornes,
& oper gamys þat fawknars & hunters can make.¹

The writer of this passage knows what he wants to say, and says it with some felicity of phrasing, and a delight in outdoor sights and scenes rarely met with in medieval literature.

It was prose such as this which was produced on all sides during the fifteenth century, 'neither seeking to be over-fine, nor yet living over-careless'. Side by side with the more rhetorical cadences of writers nourished on religious and homiletic models, or on the writers of antiquity, we must allow an honourable place for those who tried 'to speak plainly and nakedly, after the common sort of men, in few words'.

¹ *Treatise of Fysshynge wyth an Angle*, ed. T. Satchell, 1883, p. 4.

THE BLINDING OF GLOSTER

BY J. I. M. STEWART¹

In *The Influence of the Audience on Shakespeare's Drama* Robert Bridges maintains that the blinding of Gloster upon the stage in the third act of *King Lear* notably instances the depraving effect of the playhouse public upon Shakespeare's art. Throughout the plays there is much that must have offended Shakespeare: the abundant obscenity, for example, and the foolish verbal trifling. These were surely imposed upon him by a coarse and stupid audience to whose solicitations he was amenable, and it is likely, therefore, that other of his artistic failures have their explanation here. A stupid audience will also be obtuse, and we must suppose that what seems horrible to us, and seemed horrible to Shakespeare, was deliberately purveyed to these 'wretched beings' as a mere pleasant excitement. Gloster's agony is a 'concession' made against the dramatist's better judgment.

But of Shakespeare's concessions to the audience there is another view, summarily stated by Walter Raleigh in the year in which Bridges's essay was first printed:²

In nothing is Shakespeare's greatness more apparent than in his concessions to the requirements of the Elizabethan theatre, concessions made sparingly and with an ill grace by some of his contemporaries, by him offered with both hands, yet transmuted in the giving, so that what might have been a mere conivance in baseness becomes a miracle of expressive art.

Raleigh's words read like a vindication of Shakespeare against the general indictment preferred by Bridges. Can they be felt at all to hold in the particular instance of Gloster's blinding?

In *King Lear* there is an unusual amount of imagery drawn from vision and the eyes.³ From the moment when Goneril estimates her love for her father as 'Deerer then eye-sight' through Lear's invocation of that very eyesight's destruction—

You nimble Lightnings, dart your blinding flames
Into her scornfull eyes—

and on to the moment when his own eyes, 'not o' th' best', make their merciful mistake—

Do you see this? Looke on her! Looke her lips,
Looke there, looke there—

¹ Owing to the long delay in mails to Australia, the author has been unable to read the proof:—[Ed. R.E.S.].

² *Shakespeare*, 1907, p. 27.

³ P. V. Kreider, *Gloucester's Eyes* (Sh. Assoc. Bulletin, 1933, viii).

the use, the abuse and the cheats of vision are constantly prominent; and this, like Edgar's terrible

The darke and vitious place where thee he got,
Cost him his eyes—

prompts us to apprehend a symbolism of sight and blindness having its culmination in Gloster's tragedy. The leading significance here has been well pointed out by Mr. Granville-Barker:¹

The larger dramatic value of a meeting between the mad Lear and blind Gloster it is surely hard to overrate. What could better point the transcendent issue Shakespeare has developed from the two old stories than this encounter of the sensual man robbed of his eyes with the wilful man, the light of his mind gone out?

Here is a depth in *King Lear* at which the blinding of Gloster, whether to be represented or not, has appropriateness in the fable; and it is perhaps worth distinguishing a further depth at which this is, if more obscurely, so. There is something unmistakably atavic about the play. Like Keats's *Hyperion* it treats of the procession of the generations and the struggle this involves: 'The yonger rises, when the old doth fall.' But whereas Keats would use his myth to interpret philosophical and personal problems which are essentially modern, Shakespeare drives to his story's immemorial core in drama, and projects the struggle in that extreme form in which, phylogenetically, it still exists in the recesses of every human mind. The first anthropologist to approach *King Lear*—curiously enough, he seems not yet to have arrived—when he observes how one paternal figure is deprived of his possessions and wits, and another of his eyes, will certainly aver that these incidents are symbolical as such things in dreams are symbolical: they veil an unconscious fantasy of the kind classically expressed in the myth of Uranus and Cronus. So at this level again—the deeper level at which tragic drama tends to rehearse archetypal imaginative themes—Gloster's maiming is implicated with the play, cohering with its primitive character as a whole and having a distinguishable relationship to yet more savage deprivations in analogous parent-and-child stories.

We may feel, then, that Shakespeare turned to Sidney's story of the blinded Paphlagonian king both of intention and by radical dramatic instinct, and that this distinguishes Gloster's blinding from such virtually gratuitous horrors as Hieronimo's biting out his tongue in *The Spanish Tragedy* and the tearing out of Piero's tongue in *Antonio's Revenge*. As Mr. Edmund Blunden has written of the play:²

The mind of the dramatist is such that wherever we are perplexed we are safe in agreeing with the rustic summing up 'the mystery of things': 'It all be done for a purpose'—several purposes.

¹ *Prefaces to Shakespeare, First Series*, 1927, p. 179.

² *Shakespeare's Significances*, 1929, p. 18.

But this, it may be maintained, goes for nothing, since it is purely and simply the presentation before us that is unbearable and to be explained in terms of an insensitive audience and a calloused dramatist. Do not the issues, however, interdigitate? Where the purpose is artistic the handling will be in the spirit of art. If Gloster's blinding is something other than a mere sensational outcrop upon the play, if it has real meaning in this tragedy of acknowledged genius, then its presentation on the stage is less likely to be a passing concession to crude appetites and more likely to be the issue of disinterested aesthetic concern. Having seen both a conscious and an involuntary symbolical purpose expressed in the blinding can we go on to discover any aesthetic consideration which did in fact prompt Shakespeare to place it directly before his audience? And can we distinguish any particular reason he had for apprehending success from so drastic a show of violence?

The first of these questions is, of course, in part answered by a consideration of the dramatic structure. *King Lear* alone among the tragedies has two parallel plots, and this is a device of intensification. Two planes of torment, each with its own tempo, are built into the play. Lear's tragedy is progressive or incremental; and primarily spiritual. Gloster's tragedy is catastrophic, the blow coming in a single shattering frenzy of hate; and it is its awful physical finality that is at first predominant. The artistic purpose is clear enough: 'Gloucester is bound, and tortured, physically; and so the mind of Lear is impaled, crucified on the cross-beams of love and disillusion . . . The Gloucester theme throughout reflects and emphasizes and exaggerates all the percurrent qualities of the Lear theme.'¹ Thus the single stroke of Gloster's blinding had to be set over against, and indeed overgo, the long torment, the progressive deprivations, of the old king. Somehow, and even at the play's pitch here in the third act, the thing had to be brought sharply home. No mere narration would stand out in the necessary relief. And so it was the stage or nothing.

This is, in a sense, a negative consideration: Shakespeare took the course he did because the alternative was ineffective. But we may, perhaps, add something positive by returning to the play's imagery and noticing its dominant character as described by Miss Caroline Spurgeon:²

The intensity of feeling and emotion in *King Lear* and the sharpness of its focus are revealed by the fact that in Shakespeare's imagination there runs throughout only one overpowering and dominating continuous image . . . In the play we are conscious all through of the atmosphere of buffeting, strain and strife, and, at moments, of bodily tension to the point of agony . . . of a human body in anguished movement, tugged, wrenched, beaten, pierced, stung, scourged, dislocated, flayed, gashed, scalded, tortured and finally broken on the rack.

¹ G. Wilson Knight, *The Wheel of Fire*, 1930, pp. 186-8.

² *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us*, 1935, p. 338.

The blinding of Gloster represents a sort of crystallizing of this element of physical outrage which the imagery holds so massively in suspension throughout the play. As a means of intensification the technique is found elsewhere. What gives the final romances their peculiarly concentrated or quintessential Shakespearean quality is partly, as Professor Wilson Knight has shown,¹ the actualizing in them of certain of the dominant images of the earlier plays—that which has been continually suggested to us through the medium of figurative language being now brought before us in very fact. In Gloster's ordeal there is something similar: a spilling over, as it were, of physical outrage from imagery into action. And in this lay, perhaps, the chief consideration in favour of staging the blinding. By this means Shakespeare achieves the powerful effect of a suddenly realized imagery: the oppressive atmosphere of the play here condensing in a ghastly dew.

Thus if it was indeed the artist who made choice we can a little follow his calculations—whereas if it was a conniver in baseness Shakespeare certainly remains inscrutable enough. But still the decision was hazardous and he must have been well aware, surely, of the precipice to be skirted, of the exploits of King Cambyzes and the Emperor Selimus, of Clois Hoffman's iron crown in the grisly play which Chettle had put forward as a counter-attraction to *Hamlet* only a few years before. May we not fancy him, even, as glimpsing Bridges in his study, or Professor Schücking on his dais, a pile of 'the old atrocity-plays'² beside him as he comes to comment the place? For showing the blinding of Gloster there were reasons valid in drama; nevertheless considerations enough stood on the other side. Amid all this was there any overriding condition on which he might rest? Far in the future, again, the answer was to be given; and by one of the best of his readers.

On 19 December 1817, not very long after his twenty-second birthday, Keats saw Benjamin West's 'Death on the Pale Horse'; two days later he wrote to his brothers:

It is a wonderful picture, when West's age is considered; But there is nothing to be intense upon; no women one feels mad to kiss, no face swelling into reality—The excellence of every art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth. Examine 'King Lear', and you will find this exemplified throughout; but in this picture we have unpleasantness without any momentous depth of speculation excited, in which to bury its repulsiveness.

Is not this a true perception, which the flicker of immaturity in Keats's response can by no means obscure? In *King Lear* Shakespeare contemplates his theme with intensity, and nowhere more so than in the scene under notice. In Lear's family and in Gloster's the same passions are operative,

¹ *The Shakespearean Tempest*, 1932, p. 218.

² *Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays*, 1922, p. 19.

and the twofold vision of intra-familial strife is terrible enough. Here the climax comes when Lear's daughters abandon him to the storm and Edmund betrays his own father. But it is Regan who plucks Gloster's beard and Cornwall who blinds him; it is Edmund who gives order for Lear's death. Such horrors broaden the picture we must contemplate and make it more perplexing. For we are aware that these new crimes are prompted by some extension or displacement of the unfilial passions already exhibited to us, and so we obscurely apprehend that in the world about us the whole 'masse of publique wrongs, Confusde and filde with murder and misdeeds', is but the overflow of evil from where it is most awful. Or we are obscurely aware that social disorder—as the matter might be phrased in scientific terms—has its well-spring in basic antagonisms within the primary biological unit.

The blinding of Gloster, then, is one of the places at which we are required to be widest-eyed, to see

into the core

Of an eternal fierce destruction.

It is, in fact, an eye-opener, and in the issue 'a momentous depth of speculation is excited'. This sustains something which under other conditions would be repulsive or intolerable. The quality of the poet's contemplation, the height of his argument: these enable him to reach far out into the territory of the hateful and raise what he finds there to the level of the terrible and of his tragedy. What psychological mechanism is responsible may be finally obscure, but the fact is to be verified in many works of art—and nowhere more convincingly, perhaps, than in Goya's series of etchings, 'The Disasters of War', or in his two great canvases in the Prado depicting the revolt of the people of Madrid against Murat. These (rather than, as Professor Schücking suggests,¹ Rembrandt's 'The Blinding of Samson') bring us close to what Shakespeare is attempting; and we must feel that the artist has confidence not only in what the intensity of his own contemplation can achieve but in a certain quality of response in the spectator as well. If we can make this response we shall not be depraved or merely distressed; and the effect upon us will be very like the effect of tragedy. In Shakespeare's playhouse the corresponding confidence perhaps approached audacity: audacity such as he displays in many of his great strokes—in words, for example, put in the mouth of the boy who played Cleopatra or Lady Macbeth. But it is reasonable to suppose that he understood his audience and believed that at this juncture not too many of them would respond with malevolent glee. And what if some did so? Here there is a final point, to which we are led by considering the physical conditions of the Elizabethan public playhouse, in which the ruder part of the

¹ *The Baroque Character of the Elizabethan Tragic Hero* (Proc. Brit. Acad., 1938, p. 87).

audience closely surrounded a stage the spectacle upon which evoked far stronger suggestions of participation on the part of the spectators than a modern theatre allows. In these circumstances, and at so Satanic a moment, might not the very laughter and gestures of the hopelessly unskilful or brutal reinforce rather than mar the dramatic effect intended for the judicious? It is by just such subtle casts, surely, that 'what might have been a mere connivance in baseness becomes a miracle of expressive art'. And this, while allowing something to a 'realistic' view of the audience's composition, is to maintain that Shakespeare's calculation with regard to that audience was very different from what Bridges supposes.

There is one condition which might falsify what is here advanced, namely that the play is (what John Addington Symonds took it to be ¹) 'a stony black despairing depth of voiceless and inexplicable agony'; that it was composed in a mood of overwhelming dejection in which Shakespeare was capable of misusing his still splendid powers. But that there is nothing of this in *King Lear*—which evidences, rather, a careful craft in the service of a fine spiritual sanity—a noble essay on the play has sufficiently shown.² In the only versions of the full story likely to have been known to Shakespeare or his audience Cordelia is represented as yielding to despair and taking her own life. This ending, which would be unbearable in his play, Shakespeare rejects; and the text shows him, moreover, going out of his way to ensure that his audience—even the simpler or less attentive among them—shall be aware of this departure from the familiar tale. The point is surely crucial. That Cordelia should to the last 'own false Fortune's frown' elevates the fable and enlarges the mind of the spectator; and this care of Shakespeare's to lead his audience up is hardly compatible with a willingness to follow some brutal section down.

But does not much realist criticism, we may finally ask, put forward a veritable system of such incompatibilities? We are offered an 'oscillatory' Shakespeare who regularly juxtaposes crude and disagreeable dramaturgical expedients with the most refined achievements of his own genius. And this kind of interpreting seems to lead, in fact, to pushing an exposition of faults and beauties near to the point of contradiction.³ Thus Bridges claims that it was only the artist who was corrupted and that Shakespeare remains the greatest dramatist, as well as the greatest poet, of the world. Yet he

¹ *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama*, 1884, p. 370.

² R. W. Chambers, *King Lear*, 1940.

³ 'Shakespeare's art-form is in fact a mixture of the most highly developed with quite primitive elements: on one side an inexpressible delicacy and subtlety in the portraiture of the soul, on the other aids and props to the understanding of the most antiquated description, as well as elements in the plot uncritically adopted and never properly fused into the play of character' (Schücking, *op. cit.*, p. 26). And compare W. W. Lawrence, *Shakespeare's Problem Comedies*, 1931, p. 118: 'We may as well admit that Shakespeare's art oscillates between extreme psychological subtlety, and an equally extreme disregard of psychological truth.'

asserts the core of *Hamlet* to be a trick to keep us guessing, *Macbeth* to rest upon a cleverly concealed 'dishonesty', *Othello* to be a tissue of improbabilities merely exasperating to the cultivated reader and exploited in the interest of a crude excitement tolerable only to a public with iron nerves. Surely he who wrote the world's greatest dramas, and wrote them so, is less like Dryden's Janus ('the very *Janus* of poets') than Mr. Hugh Lofting's Pushmipullyu, a creature with not only two heads but two pairs of forelegs as well, and a consequent disposition to move off in opposite directions simultaneously. Good artists are careless at times; they may have an 'uninterested' manner; but is any major expression of their genius ever of the amphisbæna kind, or a meandering between sublimity on the one hand and 'dishonesty' or the *μυσητόν* on the other?

A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY READER OF SHAKESPEARE

BY G. BLAKEMORE EVANS

I

Some time in the early part of 1688 a copy of Shakespeare's *Works* (Fourth Folio, 1685) came into the hands of an anonymous reader. In it he chose to read six rather unusually assorted plays: *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merry Wives*, *The London Prodigal*, *Othello*, and *As You Like It*. The result of his reading is a series of short, critical manuscript notices,¹ of particular interest because they reflect the judgment of an exacting and intelligent,² but non-professional reader, a form of opinion most essential to the understanding of any literary milieu but most difficult to come by even so late as the close of the seventeenth century. It is, moreover, an opinion which, though under the influence of the various fashionable doctrines, is not hag-ridden by the demands of a particular thesis and has not entirely lost what, so refreshing is it, may be called the naïveté of commonsense. Like Dr. Johnson we 'rejoice to concur with the common reader . . . uncorrupted by literary prejudices'—when we can find him!

How did Shakespeare appeal to the average educated reader of the Restoration? There is, of course, Samuel Pepys, who throughout his *Diary* scatters at ease a few comments, most frequently unkind, not to say uncritical, on those plays of Shakespeare which he saw, and re-saw, from time to time on the London stage.³ Unfortunately it is most commonly the 'improvements' foisted into the plays by Davenant-Dryden-Shadwell and company which he finds worthy of comment. Only in one instance has he

¹ These notices are part of the contents of a commonplace book, MS. Eng. Misc. c. 34, now in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The volume is a folio, containing 123 leaves, numbered 1 to 124 (missing number 105), and written both recto and verso. The handwriting throughout is the same. The first entry is dated 'Ap. 18. 1687'. An entry shortly following the Shakespeare comments is dated 'May. 4. 88'.

² For example, writing 'The Censure' on his reading of James Howell's *Dodona's Grove* (ed. 1645), he remarks: 'Tho indeed y^e manner of his writinge is not so usefull as pleasant it may doe well enough for them that are contented with superficial notions of things but doe not satisfy a curious reader haveing no precise time for any of y^e actions, and often making obscure hints . . .' (fol. 72^r).

³ 'P.D.' (see below) also seems to have frequented the theatre and among other names singles out that of Nokes, whose characterization of Sir Martin in Dryden's *Sir Martin Mar-All* he particularly admired.

left on record his reaction to the *reading* of a play of Shakespeare—*Othello*. Since this is likewise one of the plays read by our anonymous reader, Pepys's comment will make an interesting comparison: 'Up, and to Deptford by water, reading "Othello, Moore of Venice", which I ever heretofore esteemed a mighty good play, but having so lately read "The Adventures of Five Houres", it seems a mean thing' (20 August 1666).¹

Even a negligent comment like this, however, stands almost alone, as a glance at the first necessarily rather meagre chapter of Professor Ralli's *History of Shakespearean Criticism* (1932), or at the *Shakspeare Allusion Book* (1932) will show. With the exception of the recognized professional critics who published their remarks, men like Dryden, Rhymer, and Langbaine, the 'alluders' of the period remain content to rehearse the name of Shakespeare, or to make at best a passing reference to a character or scene. Thus it has seemed well worth while to confer on this private reader the almost professional notoriety of print, reproducing complete in what follows his hitherto apparently unnoticed comments. Before doing so, however, a few words about the reader himself.

A close scrutiny of the whole commonplace book has failed to reveal any clue to the writer's identity, so far at least as a name is concerned. Shortly following the earliest entry, dated 'Ap. 18. 1687', are a few notes signed 'P.D.'. While these are probably *not* the writer's initials, they may serve as a handy substitute for 'anonymous reader'. P.D., therefore, let him be.

P.D. was a man of apparently wide interests, and his reading, over the period of approximately two years which the volume covers, ranges through a solid and varied selection. With his obvious university training, he naturally pays better than lip service to the classics, although Virgil seems to be the only Roman poet whom he reads. Aristotle² and Cicero, Eustachius, and particularly Justinian (*Institutiones*) absorb a large number of pages. Of the eighty odd English works noticed by him, twenty-eight are plays,³ and all, with the exception of Suckling's, one by Richard Brome and the six of Shakespeare, belong to the Restoration period. The bulk of the

¹ *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. H. B. Wheatley, 1895, v, 457.

² Among the Aristotle is *De Arte Poetica*. His reading of this follows his reading of Shakespeare.

³ The following is a complete list, in the order read: *The Emperor of y^e Moon* (Behn, 1687); *Sir Courtly Nice* (Crowne, 1685); *The Mistaken husband written by a person of quality & published by M^r. Dryden* (1675); *The City Politiques* (Crowne, 1683); *S^r. Martin Mar-all* (Dryden, 1668); *The Royall Shepherdess* (Fountain-Shadwell, 1669); *Oedipus* (Dryden-Lee, 1679); *The Duke of Guise* (Dryden-Lee, 1683); *The Counterfeit Bridegroom or The Defeated Widow* (anon., 1677); *The Northern lass* (Brome, 1632); *Marriage A-la-Mode* (Dryden, 1673); *The Plotting Sisters* (Durfey, 1677); *The Injured Lovers or The Ambitious Father* (Mountfort, 1688); (the Shakespeare group); *S^r. Hercules Buffoon* (Lacy, 1684); *The Squire of Alsatia* (Shadwell, 1688); *Aglaura* (Suckling, 1638); *The Goblins* (Suckling, 1646); *Sir Fopling Flutter* (Etheredge, 1676); *Bury-Fair* (Shadwell, 1689); *Secret Love or The Maiden Queen* (Dryden, 1668); *The Princess of Cleve* (Lee, 1689); *The Plain Dealer* (Wycherley, 1677).

remaining closely-written folios is devoted to careful extracts from books and pamphlets dealing with the stirring politico-religious issues of the time.¹ In the course of his remarks, or 'Censures' as he likes to call them, P.D. discovers himself as a strong Church of England man, with scant use for toleration, and a good 'King's man', with a traditional respect for royal prerogative. If I were tempted to guess a little further, I might think of him as a young man lately down from the University, putting in his two years at the Inns of Court, before he returns to the country, heir apparent to his father's onerous duties as Justice of the rural Quorum, though not, in the words of the penetrating Dorothy Osborne, of the 'sort of them whose aim reaches no further than to be Justice of the Peace and once in his life High Sheriff, who reads no books but statutes. . . .'

II

SHAKESPEAR'S PLAYS (FOLS. 59^v-60^v)

Reflections on *Much ado about Nothing*.

The plott of this play is very well managed, and carries nothing in it either improbable or unnatural. Seignior Benedict & Madam Beatrice are very diverting characters, witty, well-humoured, against marriage, given to raillery quick at Rerpartee. Hero is a chaste virgin obedient to her father, true to Count Claudio: Don Pedro and Claudio men of much honour and pleasantnes. Leonato a courteous old gentleman, tender of his daughter, kind to his guests: Free & noble.

The design of y^e play is to marry Hero to Count Claudio, the underplott to joyn Seignior Benedict wth Beatrice.

The contrivance of y^e play is diverting, y^e Speech gentile & polite, y^e witt too much inclining to clenches.

He hath not observed y^e unity of time so nicely as to bring y^e representation of y^e play within one-days space, wth our modern criticks so much

¹ A few titles may be noticed: *Burnett's Letters* (1686); *A Supplement to Dr. Burnett's Letters* (1687); *The Counter-plot* by F. C. Esquire; Hobbes' *Behemoth* (1680) (passage referring to Milton and Salmasius, p. 229, noted); *The Answer to Mr. Walker on y^e Spirit of Martin Luther*; *Dr. Burnett's History of y^e Reformation* (1679-81); *The Free-holders Grand-Inquest touching y^e King and Parliament*: by Sir Robert Filmer (1680); *Toleration proud Impracticable*; *The Rehearsal Transposed* by An. Marvel (1672); *The Transposer Rehearsed* (another Milton reference noted on p. 127); *A Legal vindication of y^e Liberty of England against illegal Taxes* . . . by William Prynne (1649); etc. A few more titles of general or special interest are: *The Guardian's Instruction or Gentleman's Romance* (by M^r. Peyton); *Reflections on Modern & Ancient Philosophy*, translated out of y^e French; *Doctor Byfield's Account of Hoxden waters*; *Chorea Gigantum or Stone-Heng restored to y^e Danes* by W. Charlton D. in Phys.; *Sr. Winston-Churchill's Divi Britannici* (1675); *Dr. Domes Poems*; *Wingate's Arethm.* (1630). There is also a short section headed 'Sentences', containing among others quotations from Denham's 'Cooper's Hill', Cowley, and Ben Jonson.

enjoyn, but what is all one he contrives y^t y^e intermediate spaces shall be between y^e Acts. which if well observed, I see no reason why an action of 5 days may not be represented in 2 hours as well as an action of one in y^e same time. or why we may not as well conceive every act to take up a day as 2 hours. since neither can be done without y^e Help of an imagination willing & consenting to be cheated & deceived.

The whole is full of witt especially where either Benedickt or Beatrice appears, but y^e 1 scene of y^e 4th Act is of another strain, full of sorrow & passion and very finely contrived.

Reflections on y^e play
call'd Measure for Measure.

The play is something too serious for a Comedy y^e Plott is well layd but wants something to make it pleasant: Angelo a man of austere living is taken with y^e beauty of Isabella sister to Claudio. & committs y^e same fault with one in her place that he condemned Claudio for: The Duke under y^e disguise of a Fryer carrys on the intreigue, & when he reveals himself, he reveals the Hypocrisy of Angelo, w^h he had his deputy in his Dukedome.

he marrys Isabella, makes Angelo marry Mariana, & Claudio Juliet, & Lucio his punck.

The 2 and 4 Scenes of y^e 2^d Act contain y^e prayer of Isabel, & frailty of Angelo, and are very full of sense & reasoning.

The Merry wives of
Windsor.

The plott is good, but y^e characters & persons of y^e play so mean, y^e witt & language & conversation so plain, that 'tis scarce worth reading.

The London Prodgal.

Hath no characters y^t promise any thing and if wee look no farther than y^e contrivance is a good play, but it wants y^e quicknes of good repertee, & pleasantnes of witt & sense.

The Tragedy of Othello.

Collected Sentences.

The robbed that smiles steales something from the thief. p. 115.

Where preferment goes by merit each second stands heir to th' first—p. 112.

You are one of those that will not serve God if y^e devil bid you: because you think us Ruffians you'll not hear our counsell. p. 112.

To shew a flag & sign of love. p. 112. to play & trifle with majesty. ib.—My services shall out-tongue his complaints. p. 112—

She that was ever fair & never proud
Had tongue at will & yet was never loud:
Never lackt gold & yet went never gay
Fled from her wish & yet said now I may

She that being angred, her revenge being nigh
 Bad her wrong stay & her displeasure fly.
 She that could think & not disclose her mind
 See suitors following & not look behind.

Reflections on y^e Moore
 of Venice.

The best scenes in this play are those y^e carry on
 Otello's jealousy viz. Act 3, sc. 3 & 4. Act 4. sc. 1 &
 2. Act 5. sc. 2. Iago a villain works up y^e passion
 with much art & great success, Othello takes fire &
 is consumed in y^e heat of passion: y^e whole is done
 in such lively characters that is (*sic*) must needs
 affect y^e reader.

Is (*sic*) seems something irregular in y^e plott^r that
 Desdemona after she was smothered should be
 made to speak again to Her maid Aemilia. Act. 5.

He seems to affected (*sic*) clinches mightily who
 thinks two words beginning with y^e same letter will
 make a jest: for certainly he aimed at witt in this
 sentence. viz, You'l have your daughter covered
 with a barbary Horse [y^e Moore] you'l have
 coursers for cousins, & Génnets for Germans.
 Act. 1. sc. 1.

The play is very serious, & full of good thoughts,
 y^e Plott regular & Tragical, every where well but
 where he would aim at witt, as when he brings in
 Iago & Rhoderigo: but they rally so flatt & insipidly
 that they don't rise to y^e pitch of Coblers: A greasy
 Cook would be more brisk & frolicsome.

As you like it.
 Com^r Shakesp.

Collected Sentences.

I had rather be woo'd by a snail than you: for tho
 he comes slowly yet he brings his house upon his
 back, & that's a better joynture than you can make
 me. besides he brings his horns along with him wth
 such as you are fain to be beholding to your wives
 for, but he comes armed with his fortune & prevents
 y^e slander of his wife. Act 4. s. 1.

I am never aware of my witt till I break my shins
 against it. Act 2. sc. 4.

Some Reflections on y^e
 play.

The plott is story contrived into acts & scenes ² y^e
 best intrigue is y^e between Orlando & his counter-
 feited Rosalind: Act. 3. Sc. 2. Act. 4. Sc. 1. Act 5.
 Sc. 1 2. & 4. In these there is some witt & repartee,
 and sometimes scattered in other scenes: but to
 speak in a word, the play is but indifferent.

¹ In place of this phrase P.D. originally wrote: 'improbable'.

² P.D.'s implied criticism is best understood in the light of a comment of Sir Robert Howard's (Preface to *Four New Plays*, 1665): 'The *Spanish* Plays pretend to more, but indeed are not much, being nothing but so many Novels put into Acts and Scenes, without the least attempt or design of making the Reader more concern'd than a well-told Tale might do' (*Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. J. E. Spingarn, 1908, II, 103).

III

The most immediately interesting part of P.D.'s criticism (on *Much Ado*) lies in his defence of Shakespeare for failing to observe the unity of time. His remarks show both intelligent reading and common sense. The sop he throws to the unities on the score that the play is so arranged 'y^t y^e intermediate spaces shall be between y^e Acts' is ingenious, if not strictly true, and his appeal to commonsense anticipates in spirit Dr. Johnson's celebrated treatment of the same question in his *Preface*.¹ The final reference to 'an imagination willing & consenting to be cheated & deceived' reminds one inevitably of Coleridge's famous dictum demanding of the playgoer 'willing suspension of disbelief'.

In general we may observe that P.D. is principally interested in questions of decorum, sense, language, and wit; the question of poetry as such rarely seems to have concerned him. Thus in *Much Ado* he feels the passion of Leonato's sorrow over the apparent defilement of Hero, but credits, his feeling to the fact that the scene is 'very finely contrived'. So also in *Othello* he finds himself moved by the play, but attributes it to the artistry with which 'y^e whole is done in such lively characters that [it] must needs affect y^e reader'. This is true criticism so far as it goes, but it is criticism which looks on the outside only, the worship of form in a waste of spirit. For this attitude P.D. is not to be blamed, living in an age, which, as Chamberlayne laments, 'cries down all things of this nature [poetry] for subjects of inutility, not tending to the improvment of science'. Partly a corollary of this attitude, and partly a naturally inherited feeling for the didactic in literature, may be traced in P.D.'s commendation of a play for 'good thoughts' (*Othello*), 'very full of sense and reasoning' (*Measure for Measure*).

If, however, P.D. fails to treat of poetry with the feeling of an Elizabethan, he has an obvious passion for what he calls 'witt and language'. Of language he demands that it be 'gentile and polite' and capable of supporting 'sentences' at a proper elevation.² Thus for lack of 'language & conversation' (not to mention wit) he utterly condemns *The Merry Wives*.

¹ Compare Sir Robert Howard's Preface to *The Great Favourite* (1668): 'for if strictly and duely weigh'd, 'tis as impossible for one stage to present two Houses or two Roomes truly as two Countreys or Kingdomes, and as impossible that five houres, or four and twenty houres should be two houres and a halfe as that a thousand houres or yeares should be less then what they are, or the greatest part of time to be comprehended in the less' (*Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. J. E. Spingarn, 1908, II, 109). This passage is quoted by Dryden in his 'Defense of the Essay of Dramatic Poesy' (1668), which essay, as well as 'The Essay of Dramatic Poesy' itself, it would seem likely P.D. knew (see below).

² Thus of Fountaine and Shadwell's *The Royall Shepherdesse* (1669) he says: 'The expressions & sentences of this play are somewhat elevated yett swell not into bombast: his heroes speak with majesty & grace, but doe not rave: The prase has much in it of the conversation of a gentleman and the whole very delightfull' (fol. 25^r).

His ideal in this respect (as for wit too) is Etheredge's *Sir Fopling Flutter*, for, he says, 'The whole play is full of very good language, & witt like a gentleman of much conversation: Witt, raillere & Repartee in every scene' (fol. 115^v). Though this is not the place to enter into the complicated question of 'wit' as it was understood by the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, I should like to distinguish two general aspects of the term. First there was the philosophical concept of wit as of a quality, a kind of working leaven, which pervaded a literary work, giving it at the same time vigour and symmetry and producing the 'whole' so dear to neo-classic criticism. 'In a tru Piece of *Wit* all things must be, / Yet all things there agree.'¹

Alongside this architectonic concept, a concept more or less ignored (or perhaps implicit) in P.D.'s comments, flourished the more popular use of the term. Wit to most people simply meant smart word play and *double entendre*, the buying of bargains, and the despised pun. There was, however, an attempt by the judicious to distinguish between polite repartee or clever raillery, and the kind of thing which had passed for such in an earlier and less refined age. As fifty years earlier the Caroline dramatist, Cartwright, in eulogizing Fletcher, had cried:

Shakespeare to thee was dull, whose best jest lyes
I'th' Ladies questions, and the Fooles replies,
Old fashion'd wit, which walk'd from town to town
In turn'd Hose, which our Fathers call'd the Clown;
Whose wit our nice times would obsceanesse call
And which made Bawdry pass for Comicall.²

so in P.D.'s time it was the fashion to deride what he calls 'y^e old witt'³ of plays written before the Restoration, which 'worn by Time, seems crack'd, and out of date; / And from its Age suspected in its Weight'.⁴ A representative of his age in this respect, P.D. condemns Shakespeare as one 'too much inclining to clenches' and produces a particularly atrocious example from *Othello* with the just rebuke that 'he seems to [have] affected clinches mightily'.⁵ On the other hand, he is willing to concede to *Much Ado* that 'The whole is full of witt', and to *As You Like It* that 'there is some witt & repartee' in some scenes (which he specifies) 'and sometimes scattered in other scenes'. Unquestionably something of P.D.'s criticism

¹ Cowley's ode 'Of Wit'.

² From his second poem to Fletcher (*Life and Poems of William Cartwright*, ed. R. Cullis Goffin, 1918, pp. 91-92).

³ In his 'Reflection' on Shadwell's *Bury Fair* (1689) he says: 'There are some characters aimed at, and not very ill managed, M^r. Oldwit a friend of Fletchers son to Ben, crony to Cleaveland and Tom Randel had seen some plays at Blackfryers, supt at y^e Apollo and much in love with puns, & y^e old witt. . . . ' (fol. 118^v).

⁴ From Wycherley's 'Epistle to Mr. Dryden' (*Posthumous Works*, 1728, II, 27).

⁵ Probably suggested by Dryden's remark in his famous eulogy of Shakespeare, 'his comick wit degenerating into clenches' (*Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), ed. T. Arnold, 1939, p. 67).

of *Othello* on this score can be laid to the shades of the neo-classic theory of decorum which utterly condemned the tragic-comic mixture. Certainly Iago and Roderigo are dismissed with a summary vengeance!—'they rally so flatt & insipidly that they don't rise to y^e pitch of Coblers: A greasy Cook would be more brisk & frolicksome'.¹ Again it was his careful sense of decorum which makes him condemn the revival of Desdemona after apparent death, a revival which has remained a source of some embarrassment to later critics and producers.

IV

In fairness to P.D., and because of their own very genuine interest, I conclude this study with some examples of criticism as he exercised it on his writing contemporaries. They may be given without comment.

Of Dryden:

Religio Laici (1682): The poem is epistolary, and therefore argumentative: y^e expression easy, natural: neither too close, nor too prolix; and such as may bear a second reading perhaps with more delight than the first. . . . (fol. 64')

Sir Martin Mar-all: The character of a conceited undertaking fool is very well-figured in S^r. Martin Mar-all and better acted by M^r. Nokes: in the whole there is variety of plott, some good language: but as few good repartees, as facetious jests. (fol. 24')

Oedipus (Dryden and Lee): The story of the play is a deep tragedy and therefore requir'd high & lofty expressions. In doing which the authours of this play abound more with sonorous lines than strong sense. . . . I suppose the authors design'd to make y^e Hero speak big and therefore no wonder if they sometimes over shoot y^e mark. (fol. 26')

Secret Love: The reason M^r. Dryden gives for his indecorum in y^e last scene is to make the play goe of more smartly: I confess 3 or 4 good repartees would have agreed very well with y^e characters of Celadon & Florimel, but indeed 'tis too long to take up 2 pages: The plot cools while y^e are prateing, and is almost lost before y^e Queen comes to her part again: 'Tis not so easy a passage from y^e quick rallery to y^e serious conclusion of y^e play w^{ch} seems to want a Tag. . . . (fol. 119')

Of Marvel:

The Rehearsal Transposed (1672): He that has the patience to read 326 pages of railing without much wit or sense had need have much leasure too and time that he knows not how to spend.² The author is as tedious when he has got the Archdeacon at a blind side, and impertinently sophistical, that he puts his wits on y^e wrack and yet does not extend them an inch beyond that pitch—I could prescribe this book at going to bed for an opiate potion—I confess out of y^e whole might have been collected 2 or 3 sheets

¹ The phrase 'flat and insipidly' was perhaps again suggested by Dryden: 'He [Shakespeare] is many times flat, insipid' (*op. cit.*, p. 67).

² Compare a remark in Halifax and Prior's 'The Hind and the Panther Transversed' (1687) which perhaps suggested P.D.'s comment: 'Well said, little Bayes, I'faith the Critick must have a great deal of Leisure, that attacks those Verses.'

that might pass currant, but this is to bring a mountain to a molehill—He that would read to the most advantage had best wink & choose his place: perhaps one page might divert when 326 quite overwhelm a man. (fols. 90^v–91^r)

Of Lee:

The Princess of Cleve: There are some things in this play very good & some things as bad: 'tis incoherent & may be seen 'twas writ by a mad man, that had yet some remaines of sense & fancy. (fol. 120^r)

Of Suckling:

Aglaure: His second 5th Act is much y^e best: it gives a new beauty to y^e play: whereas in y^e former was nothing but blood and wounds, this has an amicable composure: The Poet shews greater skill in preserving his Heros alive than in killing y^e: the sword & pistol & poison are always ready, but life preserv'd with honour costs a second thought. (fol. 101^r)

IZAACK WALTON'S PROSE STYLE

BY H. J. OLIVER¹

I

One of the more interesting features of modern scholarship has been the renewal of interest in seventeenth-century prose, particularly of the less ornate kind. Critics like Mrs. Bennett² and Mr. Hugh Macdonald³ have shown that there were many in the seventeenth century who distrusted rhetoric: Mr. Macdonald argues conclusively that 'there had existed throughout the first half of the century, as there had existed from the days of Chaucer, or for that matter King Alfred, a straightforward prose in which it was quite easy to say plain things plainly'.

Yet even Mr. Macdonald seems to me to retain from traditional criticism one idea that will not stand close examination: the idea, namely, that Izaak Walton wrote this straightforward seventeenth-century prose 'in which it was quite easy to say plain things plainly'. Mr. Macdonald writes: 'Izaak Walton is perhaps too obvious to need mention. His vocabulary is modern and his style lucid: in fact his prose is so limpid and easy that he is perhaps sometimes overlooked, because of the difficulty of saying much about him.'⁴

Against this view of the simplicity of Walton's style there have been one or two mild protests, as when Lowell said: 'Walton too often leaves his sentences in a clutter';⁵ or when John Buchan wrote of Walton's prose: 'At its worst it is monotonous, the sentence falling away into shapelessness and a flat and ugly close';⁶ but the general opinion has been that Walton's style is 'simple' and 'unaffected',⁷ and few have made Garnett's reservation that it 'almost verges upon garrulity'. Mr. Richard Church, for example, after stating, in my opinion wrongly, that all Elizabethan prose was 'trammelled by verse rhythms', claims that 'Walton came upon subtler and cooler rhythms'—whatever they are. 'The effort was deliberate', he says, and he asks us to watch Walton learning 'to manipulate the long sentence, that test of a good prose writer'.⁸

¹ Owing to the long delay in mails to Australia, the author has been unable to read the proof—[Ed. *R.E.S.*].

² 'An Aspect of Seventeenth-Century Prose', *R.E.S.*, vol. xvii (1941).

³ 'Another Aspect of Seventeenth-Century Prose', *R.E.S.*, vol. xix (1943).

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

⁵ 'Walton', in *Latest Literary Essays and Addresses* (1891), p. 90.

⁶ Introduction to *The Compleat Angler* (O.U.P., 1901; revised 1935), p. xxi.

⁷ R. Garnett, *The Age of Dryden* (1895), p. 219.

⁸ *Spectator*, 5 October 1929, p. 447.

Let us then see how Walton manipulates a long sentence. One taken from *The Compleat Angler* will serve as a first example:

But, my worthy friend, as I would rather prove myself a *Gentleman*, by being *learned* and *humble*, *valiant* and *inoffensive*, *vertuous* and *communicable*, than by any fond ostentation of riches, or wanting those virtues my self, boast that these were in my Ancestors (and yet I grant that where a noble and ancient descent and such merits meet in any man, it is a double dignification of that person :) So if this Antiquity of *Angling* (which for my part I have not forced), shall, like an ancient family, be either an honour or an ornament to this vertuous Art which I profess to love and practice, I shall be the gladder that I made an accidental mention of the antiquity of it; of which I shall say no more but proceed to that just commendation which I think it deserves.¹

Lest that should not be considered a fit example of Walton's later work, a sentence from the Life of Sanderson may be given. I quote it from the revised version, which is actually more involved than the original, although to a reader of the original further complication would have seemed impossible. Walton is discussing a preface:

In which there was such strength of Reason, with so powerful and clear convincing Applications made to the Nonconformists, as being read by one of those dissenting Brethren, who was possess'd of a good sequester'd Living, and with it such a spirit of covetousness and Contradiction, as being neither able to defend his error, nor yield to truth manifested (his conscience having slept long and quietly in that Living) was yet at the reading of it so awakened (for there is a Divine Power in reason) that after a conflict with the reason he had met, and the damage he was to sustain if he consented to it (and being still unwilling to be so convinc'd, as to lose by being over-reason'd) he went in haste to the Bookseller of whom 'twas bought, threatned him, and told him in anger, he had sold a Book in which there was a false Divinity; and that the Preface had upbraided the Parliament, and many godly Ministers of that party for unjust dealing.²

It is obvious that Gosse is right in saying that Walton's style is not altered even after the great changes in prose style during his lifetime.³ It is also obvious that he does not belong with Bunyan or with the members of the Royal Society who, before the time of the Life of Sanderson, were insisting on simplicity, accuracy and brevity in all prose likely to come under their notice. An opinion from them of the following passage from the revised Life of Donne would be interesting:

He gave an hundred pounds at one time to an old Friend, whom he had known live plentifully, and by a too liberal heart and carelessness, became decayed in his Estate: and, when the receiving of it was denied, by the Gentlemen saying, *He wanted not*; for the Reader may note, that as there be some spirits so generous as to labour to conceal, and endure a sad poverty, rather than expose themselves to those blushes that attend the confession of it; so

¹ *The Compleat Angler*, ch. i (pp. 38-9) of the *World's Classics* edition, from which, where possible, I take my page-references for the *Lives* and *The Compleat Angler*.

² Quoted from *The Compleat Walton*, ed. G. L. Keynes, p. 500.

³ 'Izaak Walton', in *English Prose Selections*, ed. Sir Henry Craik, vol. ii, p. 342.

there be others to whom Nature and Grace have afforded such sweet and compassionate souls, as to pity and prevent the Distresses of Mankind; which I have mentioned because of Dr. *Donne's* Reply, whose Answer was, *I know you want not what will sustain nature, for a little will do that; but my desire is, that you who in the days of your plenty have cheared and raised the hearts of so many of your dejected friends, would now receive this from me, and use it as a cordial for the chearing of your own: and upon these terms it was received.*¹

After that passage, it is difficult to believe with Gosse that Walton 'was disengaged from those coils of verbiage in which his contemporaries writhed like Laocoons'.² It will be evident that he was struggling with the more ornate, balanced prose of a previous age, and was indeed trying to obtain some of the essentially rhetorical effects which the religious writers of the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries could gain so well.

II

In this attempt he failed, sometimes badly. And he failed, it may be suggested, partly because, unlike those religious writers who composed in the style to which their sermons and other rhetorical work had accustomed them, he was never quite certain whether to regard prose as something to be read silently or something to be spoken aloud.

Walton's verse is uneven because he was not always able to decide between speech rhythm and the more regular beat of a verse pattern. Similarly he tries to use the mannerisms of speech in his prose and therefore sometimes spoils it as prose. The following passage seems to depend for its effect on being read aloud:

Throw this bait thus ordered (which will look very yellow) into any great still hole where a Trout is, and he will presently venture his life for it, 'tis not to be doubted if you be not espyed; and that the bait first touch the water, before the line; and this will do best in the deepest stillest water.³

That is also true of the passage in which Walton speaks of the twelve Apostles:

Of which twelve, we are sure he chose four that were simple Fisher-men, whom he inspired . . . these men he chose to call from their irreprovable employment of Fishing, and gave them grace to be his Disciples, and to follow him and doe wonders, I say four of twelve.⁴

No doubt Lowell was thinking of some such example when he said that Walton's prose was admirable because one can always hear the living voice through it. But it may be questioned if this is a compliment to any prose style; spoken and written English are two different things, although every seventeenth-century writer had naturally not realized that.

¹ *Life of Dr. John Donne*, pp. 70-1.

² *English Prose Selections*, ed. cit., p. 341.

³ *The Compleat Angler*, ch. xvii (pp. 202-3).

⁴ *Ibid.*, ch. i (pp. 48-9).

In any case, Walton is inconsistent. Some of his sentences can be excused only as attempts to give the illusion of speech; but one wonders what the living voice would make of those many other sentences in his prose which even when read silently give a strange impression that can only be described as breathlessness. These passages from *The Compleat Angler* may serve as examples:

And Scholar, there is also a Flounder, a Sea-fish, which will wander very far into fresh Rivers, and there lose himself, and dwell and thrive to a hands breadth, and almost twice so long, a fish without scales, and most excellent meat, and a fish that affords much sport to the Angler, with any small worm, but especially a little blewish worm, gotten out of Marsh-ground or Meadows, which should be well scowred, but this though it be most excellent meat, yet it wants scales, and is as I told you therefore an abomination to the Jews.¹

There is also a lesser *Cadis-worm*, called a *Cock-spur*, being in fashion like the spur of a Cock, sharp at one end, and the case or house in which this dwells is made of small husks, and gravel, and slime, most curiously made of these, even so as to be wondered at, but not to be made by man no more than a *King-fishers* nest can, which is made of little Fishes bones, and have such a Geometrical inter-weaving and connexion, as the like is not to be done by the art of man: This kind of *Cadis* is a choice bait for any float-fish; it is much less than the *Piper-Cadis*, and to be so ordered, and these may be so preserved ten, fifteen, or twenty days, or it may be longer.²

And he is not thinking of the living voice at all in the *Lives* (where, obviously, there is less temptation to think of it) when he falls into the cataloguing style that he avoided so well in *The Compleat Angler*:

This for Mr. Hooker's Learning. And for his Behaviour . . . This was his Behaviour towards God; and for that to man . . .³

It is interesting to watch Walton trying to obtain essentially rhetorical effects, and failing both because he tries to convey too much information at the same time, and because he lacks the passion that carries Donne's prose along so splendidly. This example is from the *Life of Hooker*:

And the Act following he was compleated Master, which was Anno 1577. his Patron Doctor Cole being Vice-chancellor that year, and his dear friend Henry Savill, of Merton Colledge being then one of the Proctors. 'Twas that Henry Savill, that was after Sir Henry Savill, Warden of Merton Colledge, and Provost of Eaton: He which founded in Oxford two famous Lectures, and endowed them with liberal maintenance.

'Twas that Sir Henry Savill, that translated and enlightned the History of Cornelius Tacitus, with a most excellent Comment; and enriched the world by his laborious and chargeable collecting the scattered pieces of S. Chrysostome, and the publication of them in one entire Body in Greek; in which Language he was a most judicious Critick. 'Twas this Sir Henry Savill, that had the happiness to be a Contemporary, and familiar friend to Mr. Hooker; and let Posterity know it.⁴

¹ *Op. cit.*, ch. xiii (p. 175).

³ *Life of Mr. Richard Hooker*, pp. 169-70.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

² *Op. cit.*, ch. xvii (p. 201).

His description of the friendship between Donne and Magdalen Herbert is better, although the same 'piling up' is used, both because it is done in a quieter way and because Walton here makes less attempt to convey information and concentrates rather on the general impression:

This Amity, begun at this time, and place, was not an *Amity* that polluted their Souls; but an *Amity* made up of a chain of sutable inclinations and virtues; an *Amity*, like that of St. *Chrysostoms* to his dear and vertuous *Olimpias*; whom, in his Letters, he calls his *Saint*: Or, an *Amity* indeed more like that of St. *Hierom* to his *Paula*; whose affection to her was such, that he turn'd Poet in his old Age, and then made her *Epitaph*; wishing all his *Body* were turn'd into *Tongues*, that he might declare her just praises to posterity.¹

Only once or twice, however, does Walton really succeed with this rhetorical manner. The best example is Piscator's defence of the simplicity of anglers, where Walton is not only speaking on a subject dear to him but is also thinking of Piscator as one trying to convince his hearers, as a preacher might convince a congregation:

Sir, I hope you will not judge my earnestness to be impatience: and for my *simplicity*, if by that you mean a harmlessness, or that simplicity which was usually found in the primitive Christians, who were, as most Anglers are, quiet men, and followers of peace; men that were so simply-wise, as not to sell their Consciences to buy riches, and with them vexation and a fear to die, If you mean such simple men as lived in those times when there were fewer Lawyers? when men might have had a Lordship safely conveyed to them in a piece of Parchment no bigger than your hand (though several sheets will not do it safely in this wiser age); I say, Sir, if you take us Anglers to be such simple men as I have spoke of, then my self and those of my profession will be glad to be so understood: But if by simplicity you meant to express a general defect in those that profess and practise the excellent Art of Angling, I hope in time to disabuse you, and make the contrary appear so evidently, that if you will but have patience to hear me, I shall remove all the Anticipations that discourse, or time, or prejudice, have possess'd you with against that laudable and ancient art; for I know it is worthy the *knowledge* and *practise* of a wise man.²

In spite of such occasional success with the rhetorical style, I think it is clear that Walton does not belong to the 'Ciceronian' school of oratorical prose-writers. Nor is he of the 'Attic' school, with its insistence on clarity and simplicity: nowhere in Walton does one find the crispness and precision of statement of Bacon, Selden or Earle; rather does he write the old-fashioned kind of prose which can frequently be broken up into parallel and parenthesis, but otherwise seems almost formless to a modern reader. It is worth noting that if one wishes to find a parallel to Walton's style, one has to look for it not in Cotton, but in Peacham, not in Chillingworth, but in Foxe.

¹ *Life of Mr. George Herbert*, p. 265.

² *The Compleat Angler*, ch. i (pp. 23-4).

III

It is also necessary to query Gosse's positive statement: 'The curious disease of Euphuism is seen to be quite cured by the time we reach Walton; not a trace of it is left in him, though it was to be met with long afterwards in writers of far greater pretension.'¹

Not all 'balanced' prose, of course, is to be described as Euphuism or Arcadianism: deliberate parallelism of phrase and of construction is to be found in the prose of More and several others before Lyly. But Lyly and Sidney were probably the first to make such deliberate use of artificial balance and parallel for literary ornament; and it is this love of artificial balance as a literary ornament that one finds to be a marked feature of Walton's style.

In the fifth edition of *The Compleat Angler*, for example, he adds a sentence:

And a person of honour, now living in *Worcestershire*, assur'd me he had seen a necklace or collar of Tadpoles hang like a chaine or necklace of beads about a Pike's neck, and to kill him; whether it were for meat or malice, must be to me a question.²

One wonders whether he added the sentence for the sake of the story, or for the 'meat and malice'; one wonders still more when it is noticed how he casts into deliberately balanced form even the remarks he has heard. An example is:

I will tell you, Scholar, I once heard one say, *I envy not him that eats better meat than I do, nor him that is richer, or that wears better clothes than I do. I envy no body but him, and him only, that catches more fish than I do.*³

Or, again, there is Venator's exclamation: 'Look! look! you may see all busie, men and dogs, dogs and men, all busie.'⁴

This love of balance even leads him at times perilously close to circumlocution. He will not say that Herbert was thin; he prefers to say: 'His Body was very strait, and so far from being cumbred with too much flesh, that he was lean to an extremity.'⁵

And speaking of the marriage of Herbert to Jane Danvers, he must write:

And though this begot, and continued in them, such a mutual *love and joy*, and *content*, as was no way defective: yet this mutual *content and love*, and *joy*, did receive a daily augmentation, by such daily obligingness to each other, as still added such new affluences to the former fulness of these divine Souls, as was only improvable in Heaven, where they now enjoy it.⁶

¹ *English Prose Selections*, ed. cit., p. 340.

² *The Compleat Angler*, ch. xvii (p. 203).

³ *Life of Mr. George Herbert*, p. 285.

⁴ Ch. ix (p. 148).

⁵ Ch. ii (p. 57).

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 286-7.

Indeed, Walton does not seem able to appreciate the full value of a curt statement; when, for example, he alters a sentence in Donne's letters, he is quite capable of spoiling the rhythm by adding words which *do* allow the sentence to fall away into 'shapelessness' and a 'flat close'. As an example may be given his alteration of this sentence by Donne:

Sir, I hope to see you presently after Candelmas, about which time will fall my Lent-sermon, except my Lord Chamberlain believe me to be dead, and so leave me out.

Walton not only makes it 'my Lent-sermon *at Court*' but quite misses the rhythm when he writes 'except my Lord Chamberlain believe me to be dead, and so leave me out of *the Roll*'.¹

IV

Moreover, Walton could seldom rest satisfied with one use of a good phrase or idea. One may refer to his use of the word 'elemented', which he no doubt found, as Lowell suggests,² in Donne (although not necessarily in the 'Valediction forbidding Mourning'). Walton not only borrows the word several times but also weakens its meaning when he says that Donne's 'very soul was elemented of nothing but sadness',³ and that the friendship between Donne and Wotton was 'generously elemented'.⁴

It is not then surprising to find in Walton's copy of Eusebius three attempts to write the famous sentence on Donne's hymns in the *Life of Herbert*. The first is:

On this booke folyo 28, of himns and psalms wch was his holy recreation the latter part of his life and is now his employment in heven where he makes new ditties in his praise of that god in 3 persons to whom be glory.

The second runs:

And his better part is now doing that in heaven which was most of his employment on earth magnifying the mercies and making himns and singing them, to that god to whome be glory and honor.

The third is:

In heaven wher his employment is to sing such himns as he made on erth in prase of that god to whome be glory and honor.

Then finally comes the printed version:

These *Hymns* are now lost to us; but doubtless they were such as they two now sing in *Heaven*.⁵

Critics have noticed this; but they have not noticed that Walton, being

¹ *Life of Dr. John Donne*, p. 74. See too R. E. Bennett, 'Walton's Use of Donne's Letters', *Philological Quarterly*, January 1937, pp. 30-4.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 65.

³ *Life of Dr. John Donne*, p. 51.

⁴ *Life of Sir Henry Wotton*, p. 106.

⁵ *Life of Mr. George Herbert*, p. 267.

Walton, had to try to use the same idea again. Later in the *Life of Herbert* he writes:

Thus be sung on Earth such Hymns and Anthems, as the Angels and he, and Mr. *Farrer*, now sing in Heaven.¹

A similar idea is then used in the *Life of Sanderson*: 'Thus he began that work on earth, which is now his imployment in heaven.'² The thought is, of course, a common one; but it does seem that having found the perfect expression, Walton was not unwilling to use it to adorn his prose as often as he possibly could. It is not difficult, then, to imagine how delighted he would have been at Leslie Stephen's comment: 'The good man is far too much in earnest to be aiming at literary ornament.'³

V

It would not be unfair to conclude from this examination alone that Walton's continual pleas for leniency when he had no time to revise his work were meant seriously. A study of his notes for Fulman's life of John Hales amply confirms this impression.

As Mr. Butt points out,⁴ this is 'the only manuscript which survives of Walton's literary work', and while it would be dangerous to infer from it that Walton always wrote in exactly this way, the numerous corrections do indicate that he was 'attempting to write as well as he could', so that the manuscript 'enables us to watch him in the act of composition'. The corrections show that 'Walton found some difficulty in expression'. Although an occasional sentence is neat, there is a certain lack of polish even after his revisions and it is apparent that a great deal of work would be necessary before the notes could be considered ready for publication. And since a similar lack of polish is found even after the numerous revisions of the better known work, I think we may conclude that Walton never overcame the initial disadvantages of an inadequate education.⁵ Perhaps the hopelessly bad spelling is also significant.

Nevertheless every revision clarifies the meaning. Walton refers, for example, to 'a genttelman' and later alters it to 'a friend being a neighbor genttelman', and he gains similar clarity by altering 'the gent' next time it

¹ *Life of Mr. George Herbert*, p. 317.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 414.

³ *Hours in a Library* (1892), vol. iii, p. 190.

⁴ 'Izaak Walton's Collections for Fulman's Life of John Hales', *M.L.R.*, vol. xxix (1934), pp. 267-73.

⁵ I see no reason whatever for believing with Stapleton Martin (*Izaak Walton and his Friends*, p. 3) that Walton 'must have received a very good education'. Walton was probably not being unduly modest when he wrote (Preface 'To the Reader', printed with the first collected edition of the first four *Lives*): 'I desire leave to inform you that shall become my Reader, that when I sometime look back upon my education and mean abilities, 'tis not without some little wonder at my self, that I am come to be publickly in print.' Compare Anthony à Wood's statement, quoted below.

occurs to 'the perplext partie' (but perhaps forgets that he has just used that phrase); he uses the verb 'requests' with a noun clause and on revision goes to the trouble of inserting 'that' as a conjunction, but is still quite capable of leaving 'clauses' without any verb at all. Even the occasional perfect balance of his style evidently came from labour; he writes of Lady Howe's decision to paint a portrait of Hales and says she '. . . did so, in black and white boeth very well as to the finenes and very like him and as well as to the likenes', and it is only after two or three revisions that he gets it down to: '. . . and did so, in black and white boeth exilently well as to the curiousnes and as well as to the likenes'.

VI

Such evidence perhaps allows us to see for the first time the full effect of Anthony à Wood's comment that the *Lives* were 'well done, *considering the education of the author*'.¹ Have we, perhaps, looking piously at Walton (as he is charged with looking at the subjects of his biographies) been blinded to the real character of his work? We are not detracting from his fame if we say now that nearly all his prose shows evidence of labour and of understandable lack of confidence. The very charm of his style comes from its combination of the freshness of the inexperienced writer with his occasional clumsiness, and of the informality of conversation, with devices proper to the writer of formal prose.

Walton claimed for his prose the virtue only of sincerity. Sincere it is—but not, surely, 'unaffected', 'limpid', or 'easy'.

¹ *Athenæ Oxonienses*, ed. P. Bliss, vol. i, p. 698.

'SIMPLE, SENSUOUS AND PASSIONATE'

BY B. RAJAN

Most accounts of Milton's opinions on poetry lay their emphasis on certain parenthetical passages in the *Apology for Smectymnus* and the *Reason of Church Government*. This autobiographical game (complete with conjectures about the Arthuriad) is no doubt fascinating to play, but it is apt to ignore the possibility that a great poet may have said something important, and even systematic, about the nature and limits of his profession. As a result, Saintsbury's three-volume *History of Criticism* contains only passing references to Milton. Spingarn¹ limits himself to an occasional sentence. Miss Langdon² conscientiously presents Milton as a classicist, and Professor Haller,³ with fine eloquence, presents him as a Puritan. Such simplifications may be necessary, but it is also arguable that the discovery of what Milton said is hindered by interpreting it according to settled systems to which we suppose his thought to be reducible. It is difficult, on any other grounds, to explain the extraordinary neglect of the part played by the Tractate on Education in the formulation of Milton's theory of poetry. We may, of course, discount the retrospective pleading of the 'Second Defence'.⁴ But we cannot do away with the reference in *Areopagitica* to 'those unwritt'n, or at least unconstraining laws of vertuous education, religious and civill nurture, which *Plato* there mentions, as the bonds and ligaments of the Commonwealth, the pillars and the sustainers of every writt'n Statute'.⁵ And the importance of Education in this scheme is emphasized by the almost supernatural powers with which Milton endows the man of learning. This is brought out clearly in the 'Seventh Prolusion'. Having argued that happiness is inaccessible except to a mind 'saturated and perfected by knowledge and training', Milton goes on to describe the compass of learning in terms very similar to his statement of poetic aims in the 'Vacation Exercise'. The resemblance may mean nothing (the descriptive pattern is a Renaissance commonplace)⁶ but Milton's next reference to the powers conferred by learning puts the matter beyond serious doubt.

¹ *Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* (1908).

² *Milton's Theory of Poetry and the Fine Arts* (1924).

³ *The Rise of Puritanism* (1938), *passim*.

⁴ *Works* (Columbia University Press), vol. viii, pp. 131-33.

⁵ *Areopagitica* (*Works*, ed. cit., vol. iv, p. 318).

⁶ Both resemble, e.g., the opening passage of La Primaudaye's *French Academy*; cf. also 'Third Prolusion' (*Works*, ed. cit., vol. xii, p. 171).

He will seem to be one whose power and authority the stars will obey, the land and the sea will follow implicitly, the winds and the storms will strive to please; one to whom Mother Nature even will hand over herself in surrender quite as if some god, having abdicated power on earth, had delegated to him, his court, his laws, his executive power, as though to some prefect.¹

The end is not Macaulay's schoolboy but the prophet,² and when due allowance has been made for the kind of over-statement inevitable in a Prolusion, Milton's conception of the sage corresponds quite adequately to his conception of the poet. Consequently we should not be surprised to find the educational process in the 'Tractate' terminating in the study of poetics. This is of a piece with Milton's thinking and even the exaltation of poetry above rhetoric (in opposition to Cicero and Bacon) can be found in its beginnings in the 'Third Prolusion'.³

Yet if not surprising, the matter is important. To possess and understand the Mistress knowledge, we must follow the steps which, for Milton, lead towards it. The terms of the argument are very largely commonplace, but it ends, I think, in a far from conventional dénouement. Thus the beginning is quite conventional:

The end then of Learning is to repair the ruines of our first Parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true vertue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection.⁴

To which we may compare a quotation from Baxter:

The great means of promoting love to God is duly to behold Him in his appearances to man in the ways of Nature, Grace and Glory. First therefore learn to understand and improve His appearances in Nature, and to see the Creator in all His works, and by the knowledge and love of them, to be raised to the knowledge and love of Him.⁵

And Milton, too, draws the moral:

But because our understanding cannot in this body found it self but on

¹ *Works*, ed. cit., vol. xii, p. 267.

² Haller puts the matter plainly (*op. cit.*, p. 304): 'He is like Bacon in that he clearly perceives the diseases that afflict learning. He is like Bacon too in taking all knowledge for his province and in believing that knowledge is power. But the power he is hoping to gain through knowledge is not that of the scientist but that of the orator, the preacher, the poet in public life, in a word the seer and prophet.'

³ *Works*, ed. cit., vol. xii, pp. 163-4.

⁴ *Works*, ed. cit., vol. iv, p. 277. M. W. Bundy ('Milton's view of Education in *Paradise Lost*', *J.E.G.P.*, 1922, pp. 127-52) has contrasted this with *Works*, ed. cit., vol. iv, p. 280: 'I call therefore a compleat and generous Education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices both private and publick of Peace and War.' Raphael's commission in *Paradise Lost* comes under the second heading, Gabriel's under the first. But as O. M. Ainsworth points out (*Milton on Education*, 1928, pp. 14-15, 42-43), the definitions are complementary: '... these aims, combining as they do the classical spirit with the Christian are of the essence of humanistic educational doctrine.' The transition from the visible to the invisible is of course not peculiar to Puritanism and can be found, e.g., in Vives.

⁵ *Christian Directory* (1825 edn.), vol. i, p. 375. Elsewhere Baxter refers to Education as 'God's ordinary way for the conveyance of his grace'. *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696), pp. 6-7.

sensible things, nor arrive so clearly to the knowledge of God and things invisible, as by orderly conning over the visible and inferior creature, the same method is necessarily to be follow'd in all discreet teaching.¹

Wisdom, the power to vivify details with the unity of purpose in which those details participate, is grounded on the study and registration of particulars. The unseen is arrived at through a progressive apprenticeship to the visible. Milton begins the ascent with the preliminary study of grammar. This is followed by agriculture and the arts of subsistence. Side by side with this goes the study of mathematics, geography and physics. This equips one for the mechanical arts of fortification, architecture, and engineering, and while the investigation is under way, the study of physics is simultaneously pursued through the various refinements of natural philosophy.² The sequence is obviously based on prevalent interpretations of the Great Chain.³ One therefore progresses from the study of matter to that of plants, and from plants to living creatures. Next come anatomy and physics, and Milton at this stage also allows the study of bucolic poetry.⁴ By this time the faculty of reason has been sufficiently strengthened to permit the contemplation and judgment of good and evil. Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, and Plutarch follow. This completes the study of man the individual, which is preparatory to that of man in Society. Ethics, which is concerned with the individual's duty to himself, is therefore followed by Economics, which deals with his duties towards his neighbours. By now the details comprehended under comedy have been mastered, and Milton also admits the cautious sampling of domestic tragedies such as the *Trachiniae* and the *Alcestis*.

The student can now investigate the limits and grounds of political

¹ *Works*, ed. cit., vol. iv, p. 277.

² Foster Watson has here noticed a close following of Vives's curriculum by Milton ('A Suggested Source of Milton's Tractate "Of Education"', *Nineteenth Century*, 1909, pp. 607-17). Several other resemblances are summarized by Ainsworth, ed. cit., p. 13. E. N. S. Thompson ('Milton's "Of Education"', *S.P.*, 1918, pp. 159-75) has however pointed out that Milton is less empirical than Vives, relying on book learning, not direct observation.

³ The strongest evidence for this, outside the Tractate, is *Paradise Lost*, V, 507-12:

O favourable spirit, propitious guest,
Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
Our knowledge, and the scale of Nature set
From center to circumference, whereon
In contemplation of created things
By steps we may ascend to God.

The connection between this passage and the Tractate is strengthened by the fact (pointed out by Bundy, *op. cit.*, *passim*) that Raphael's mission is specifically educational. The idea is commonplace. A typical example can be found in *The Interlude of the Four Elements* (Old Plays, ed. Dodsley-Hazlitt, vol. i, p. 9). I have not had access to W. C. Curry's *Milton and the Scale of Nature* (Stanford Univ. Studies in Lang and Lit., 1941) which has no doubt something to say about it. Milton's familiarity with the Elizabethan assumptions is alluded to by E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1943), *passim*.

⁴ The word 'bucolic' is not used by Milton, and is not accurately descriptive. The authors commended are Orpheus, Hesiod, Theocritus, Aratus, Nicander, Oppian, Dionysius, Lucretius, Manilius, and the rural part of Virgil.

organization. Such a study, initially factual, permits him to proceed to the abstract principles of law and legal justice. This is the highest attainable point in the analysis of temporal order and it therefore leads to the consideration of the eternal problems of church history and theology. It is only after the acquisition of such knowledge that history, heroic poetry, and tragedy can be understood. Thus Milton's introduction of the various literary *genres* is very far from haphazard. The implication is that each type covers a perfectly definite sector of reality, and this in turn suggests that no type can be understood without an understanding of the details it embraces. One proceeds, as always, from the visible to the invisible, from the particular to the abstract, from the dusty catalogue of facts to the creative principle which enriches and controls them. The organization behind art can only be revealed to a mind not distracted with the appraisal of components. Familiarity does not breed contempt. On the contrary it liberates a response to entelechies which transform and sustain the facts of the familiar.

The definitions which emerge from this 'placing' are, in other words, deliberate, and they correspond to a similar division by Hobbes.

As Philosophers have divided the Universe, their subject, into three Regions, *Celestiall*, *Aëriall*, and *Terrestriall*, so the Poets . . . have lodg'd themselves in the three Regions of mankind, *Court*, *City*, and *Country*, correspondent in some proportion to those three Regions of the World. For there is in Princes and men of conspicuous power, anciently called *Heroes*, a lustre and influence upon the rest of men resembling that of the Heavens; and an insincereness, inconstancy, and troublesome humour of those that dwell in populous Cities, like the mobility, blustering, and impurity of the Aire; and a plainness, and though dull, yet a nutritive faculty in rural people, that endures a comparison with the Earth they labour. From hence have proceeded three sorts of Poesy, *Heroique*, *Scommatique*, and *Pastorall* . . . the Heroique Poem narrative . . . is called an *Epique Poem*. The Heroique Poem Dramatique is *Tragedy*. The Scommatique Narrative is *Satyre*, Dramatique is *Comedy*. The Pastorall narrative is called simply *Pastorall*, anciently *Bucolique*; the same Dramatique, *Pastorall Comedy*.¹

Hobbes, you may say, is merely being ornamental. But Milton is deadly serious in his contention that only walking encyclopædias should be permitted to read tragedies. His curriculum, fantastic as it is, is merely the result of a thorough-going empiricism. The organic arts include all reality. Therefore one must study reality in its hierarchic details before proceed-

¹ J. E. Spingarn, *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, vol. ii, pp. 54-55. Milton's classification differs from that of Hobbes in that (a) he does not specifically mention Pastoral in the lowest division, (b) he lumps Comedy with Domestic Tragedy and ignores satire in the intermediate category. That he has in mind a basic threefold division is, however, made clear by his subsequent reference to 'the fitted style of lofty, mean, or lowly'. This probably originates from the three styles of classical rhetoric. For an account of the degree to which the theory of rhetoric affected that of poetry in England see J. W. H. Atkins, *English Literary Criticism, The Mediæval Phase* (1943), pp. 23-8, and D. L. Clark, *Rhetoric and Poetry in the Renaissance* (1922), *passim*.

ing to its patterning in art. Always the ascent is from the sensible to the intelligible, from things to words, from facts to poems, and from poems to poetics. And Milton, with a magnificent disregard to the practical, makes no attempt to glide over these necessities. His end is after all the poet of Ben Jonson:

I could never thinke the study of *Wisdom*e confined only to the Philosopher, or of *Piety* to the *Divine*, or of *State* to the *Politicke*: But that he which can faine a *Common Wealth* (which is the *Poet*) can govern it with *Counsels*, strengthen it with *Lawes*, correct it with *Judgements*, inform it with *Religion* and *Morals*, is all these.¹

The claim recalls that of Comenius:

Can any man be a good Naturalist, that is not seene in the Metaphysicks? Or a good Moralist, who is not a Naturalist? Or a Logician who is ignorant of real Sciences? Or a Divine, a Lawyer, or a Physician, that is no Philosopher? Or an Oratour or Poet, who is not accomplished with them all?²

So when Downname (referring to the pulpit beside which poetry is a power) remarks that 'Grammar, Rhetoric, Logicke, Physicks, Mathematicks, Metaphysicks, Ethicks, Politicks, Oeconomicks, History and Military Discipline's are all useful, he is saying nothing that Milton would not have endorsed.

There is, then, something both traditional and consistent in this remorseless advancement of learning to the appreciation and practice of the arts. But consistency applied to a traditional apparatus (one has in mind Bruno's manipulation of a Platonic paradox)³ can lead sometimes to astonishing results. This is precisely what happens in the Tractate.

And now lastly will be the time to read with them those organic arts which inable men to discourse and write perspicuously, elegantly, and according to the fitted stile of lofty, mean, or lowly. Logic therefore so much as is useful, is to be referr'd to this due place withall her well coucht Heads and Topics, untill it be time to open her contracted palm into a gracefull and ornate Rhetorick taught out of the rule of *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Phalereus*, *Cicero*, *Hermogenes*, *Longinus*. To which Poetry would be made subsequent, or indeed rather precedent, as being less subtle and fine, but more simple, sensuous and passionate.⁵

The first fact we must establish concerning this difficult but important passage is the meaning of the equivocation 'subsequent, or indeed rather

¹ Spingarn, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 28. To this and to succeeding quotations compare Milton's encyclopaedic conception of orator and poet, *Works*, ed. cit., vol. xii, p. 249.

² *A Reformation of Schooles*, 1642.

³ Quoted by Haller, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

⁴ A. O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (1936), pp. 116-21.

⁵ *Works*, ed. cit., vol. iv, p. 286. L. Jonas (*The Divine Science*, 1940, p. 169) argues that 'perspicuously' applies to logic, 'elegantly' to rhetoric, and the 'fitted style of lofty, mean, or lowly' to poetry. I cannot grant this. In the first place, Milton's discrimination of poetry from rhetoric is not one of kind, but of degree of greater passionateness; in the second place the division into 'lofty, mean, and lowly' is a commonplace of scholastic rhetoric.

precedent'. Is Milton not sure what he has to say—and if so, which of these alternatives is valid? My feeling is that he is sure and that both terms in the equivocation are intended. Poetry is subsequent to rhetoric in the educational scheme. It is precedent in its value, its intrinsic dignity. Now this, in itself, is not unconventional. If Milton has Bacon and Cicero against him, he can quote Ben Jonson, Puttenham and Sidney in his defence.¹ It is not what he says that is surprising, but the reasons he gives for saying it. Poetry is superior to rhetoric and logic because it is less subtle and fine, but more 'simple, sensuous and passionate'. In saying this, is Milton denying his Tractate—the movement of the understanding from the senses, the orderly ascent from the visible to the invisible? Is he denying the fibre of his future epic—the treatment of the Fall as a surrender to the passions? Is he denying the sun-clad power of chastity which the Lady in *Comus* so implacably announces? And lastly is he denying himself, the true poem of the *Apology for Smectymnuus*, the composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things? Are we to assume that he is driven by dualisms, that at the springs of his thought there is only inconsistency? It may be so. But there is in this passage no hesitation, no hint that he is evading a dilemma. He considers his proposition as self-evident; and because it cannot be logically justified, we have to assume that it is otherwise determined, that Milton sees in it, not an evasion of facts, but a necessary, obvious, statement of tradition.

The basis of that tradition is that the Renaissance loved action. It was their ending end, their bedrock of finality. For Ben Jonson, even the soul does not contemplate. It 'workes' and 'knowledge is the action of the soul'.² Discipline, abstention—these are necessary, but it does not follow from this that they are final. Freedom from wantonness may be freedom for

¹ Cicero describes the poet as 'closely akin to the orator, being somewhat more restricted in rhythm, but freer in his choice of words, and in many kinds of embellishment his rival and almost his equal' (*De Orat.* i, 70). Cf. Jonson: 'The Poet is the nearest Borderer upon the Orator, and expresseth all his virtues though he be tied more to numbers, is his equal in ornament, and above him in his strengths. Because in moving the minds of men, and stirring of affections, in which Oratory shewes and especially approves her eminence, he chiefly excells'. (Ded. to *Volpone*, Spingarn, vol. i, p. 15.) Puttenham also emphasizes the power of poetry (as against prose) to move (*Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith, vol. ii, pp. 8-9). For Sidney the logician and rhetorician are tied to Nature, which only the poet transcends (Gregory Smith, vol. i, p. 156). Critics of the Italian Renaissance, e.g. Savonarola, Lombardus, Varchi, differentiate in that logic proves by syllogism, rhetoric by enthymeme, poetry by example (Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-4; Spingarn, *Literary criticism in the Renaissance*, pp. 25-6). Minturno and Scaliger regard it as the business of rhetoric and poetry to move, and take it that the example is more effective than the precept.

Milton's treatment of rhetoric as ornate and graceful can be found in Hawes and Skelton, and is orthodox. But there seems no precedent for his reasons for exalting poetry above rhetoric. He may have thought he had found them in Longinus, but Longinus's basic distinction (*De Sub.* XV) is one of kind between the rhetorical and poetical imagination.

² Spingarn, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 24.

grace. But the end is not adoration—in serving God or in serving Gloriana. It is vindication, the extension of the right

. . . to subdue
By force, who reason for thir Law refuse,
Right reason for thir Law, and for thir King
Messiah . . .¹

If the world is for Milton a 'gloomy house of correction' he only transcends in order that he may transform it. There is for him no still point, no heaven of the changeless. 'Nothing can be recounted justly among the causes of our happiness unless in some way it takes into consideration both that eternal life and this temporal life.'² To ascend 'above the sphery chime' one must love virtue, virtue which sallies out to meet her adversary, which is born of action and eventually begets it. Milton would not have agreed with our latest transcendentalist: 'Through the clear waters of their being we look down on the tainted polluted mud of their actions, and we see how maimed, how blundering, how blind is the world of action compared with the world of being.'³ But for Milton the good is not final. It is merely the ground of a transforming militant goodness. We possess our souls of heavenly virtue not to escape, but to redeem our bodies: and at this point of emergence of knowledge into action the hierarchic values are reversed. We measure our understanding by its awareness of the changeless; we measure our utterance by its capacity to change. To say in this context that poetry is 'more simple, sensuous and passionate' means that its transforming intelligence permeates even the frontiers of reality, that the security of a perfected understanding orders the scope and grandeur of its utterance. The result—one wonders if it is deliberate—is to discover virtues where Plato found defects. It may of course be accidental that Milton's founding of eloquence on wisdom resembles Plato's founding of goodness on the good:

. . . that spirit of yours, not satisfied with this gloomy house of correction, will betake itself far and wide, until it shall have filled the world itself and far beyond with a certain divine extension of magnitude.⁴

To this one could compare:

. . . he was good and in one that is good no envy of anything else ever arises. Being devoid of envy then, he desired that everything should be so far as possible like himself.⁵

And what Lovejoy calls the dialectic of plentitude—the giving of existence to all possibles by goodness—does, in a sense, justify Milton's

¹ *Paradise Lost*, VI, 40-3.

² 'Seventh Prolusion', *Works*, ed. cit., vol. xii, p. 255.

³ Stephen Spender, *Life and the Poet* (London, 1942), p. 48. The reference is to Milton, Keats, and Byron.

⁴ 'Seventh Prolusion', *Works*, ed. cit., vol. xii, pp. 265-7.

⁵ *Timæus*, sections 29-30.

preference of poetry to rhetoric. Poetry is superior, because it is more inclusive, because its intelligence shines into the senses, because among all the organic arts, it has least outside its area of redemption. This may seem slender evidence on which to base so considerable a thesis. Nevertheless it makes sense of a passage which has hitherto only made sense by being wrenched from its context, and rapturously misunderstood by Coleridge and Arnold.¹ It is the kind of theory which could easily arise from an attempt to reconcile poet, Platonist, and Puritan. It recognizes and is consistent with tradition—it represents in fact the kind of critical modification which gives tradition its relevance, and its power of survival. Most important of all, it illuminates two problems which have hitherto been neglected in Miltonic research: the relationship of poetry to the good life, and the running contrast between art and nature.

Any discussion of the first must refer eventually to two passages:

For doubtlesse that indeed according to art is most eloquent, which returns and approaches neerest to nature from whence it came; and they expresse nature best, who in their lives least wander from her safe leading, which may be call'd regenerate reason. So that how he should be truly eloquent who is not withall a good man, I see not.²

And long it was not after, when I was confirm'd in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought him selfe to bee a true Poem, that is a composition and patterne of the best and honourablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroick men, or famous Cities, unlesse he have in himselfe the experience and the practice of all that which is praise-worthy.³

These passages, when they are discussed at all, are treated as a more elaborate version of Longinus' assertion that the poet must be a good man. But to me they are more than a mere recapitulation, and they can be presented as following from the argument sketched in the *Tractate*. Art is most eloquent when it returns to nature. Milton deliberately says 'return' where his successors would have said 'follow'. You cannot return to a place you have not left. Moreover nature is best expressed by those 'who least wander from her safe leading' of regenerate reason. Here the word 'regenerate' is critical. It means, quite inevitably, that the knowledge of Nature *demand*s experience at the level of Grace. Conversely the order of Grace is built on that of Nature—'our understanding cannot in this body found itself, but on sensible things'. Thus the two worlds, far from being separate, demand each other as a condition of their existence. It is the possession of knowledge, of the good, which makes possible the radiance

¹ Cf. Coleridge, *Select Poetry and Prose*, ed. Stephen Potter (1930), p. 315; M. Arnold, *Essays in Criticism: Second Series* (London, 1935: New Eversley Series), p. 71; and, for a recent example, E. E. Stoll, *From Shakespeare to Joyce* (1944), p. 73.

² 'Apology for Smectymnuus', *Works*, ed. cit., vol. iii, p. 287.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

and creative power of goodness. Reason is not restrictive. On the contrary it liberates those powers of fecundity which are otherwise mangled and suppressed in chaos. By regenerating reason in yourself you return to reason in nature, and by becoming a composition of the best and honourablest things, you answer to and discover that harmony of reason with the good, by which all nature is sustained and fertilized. I would emphasize 'fertilized' because in ordinary usage we think of creative energy as something opposed to restraint. Occasionally we discover that the two are not incompatible; and sometimes as the result of a tremendous speculative effort we persuade ourselves that the one assists the other. But Milton is bolder; and I think that what he is saying (he never quite says it because it is an instinctive assumption) is that fertility is made possible, and not merely assisted by, restraint. On this point the evidence of the *De Doctrina* is instructive:

It is objected, however, that body cannot emanate from spirit. I reply, much less then can body emanate from nothing. For spirit being the more excellent substance, virtually and essentially contains within itself the inferior one, as the spiritual and rational faculty contains the corporeal, that is, the sentient and vegetative faculty.¹

Thus every item in the hierarchies of existence is sustained and comprehended by its superior—and the chain of causes terminates in the First Cause. Knowledge *creates* power. Discipline *creates* abundance. It is not simply negative, 'the removal of disorder', not 'confined and cloyed with repetition of that which is prescribed'. It is 'the very visible shape and image of virtue',² impregnating poetic activity as the 'vital virtue' of God's spirit impregnates the creation. And because such discipline is the manifestation, the informing radiance, of the divine, it accepts no circumscriptions save those which it has created.

... or whether the rules of *Aristotle* herein are strictly to be kept, or nature to be follow'd, which in them that know art, and use judgement, is no transgression, but an enriching of art.³

The word 'enriching' should be noted carefully since it is a rare and a special word for Milton. It is used only three times in the body of his works,⁴ and since one of these occasions involves an irate reference to piracy the context of the other is overwhelmingly important:

... nor to be obtain'd by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternall Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim with the hallow'd fire of his Altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases; to this must be

¹ *Works*, ed. cit., vol. xv, p. 25.

² 'Reason of Church Government', *Works*, ed. cit., vol. iii, pp. 185-6.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁴ The Columbia Index lists 'enriching' twice and does not list 'enrich'.

added industrious and select reading, steddly observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affaires, . . .¹

The 'hallowed fire' which touches Milton touched also the prophet Isaiah; and the words 'enrich with all utterance and knowledge' are a transcript from I Corinthians i, 5: 'That in every thing, ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge'. The spirit of God enriches as it purifies. The spirit of man purified, radiant and plunging into creativeness is 'no transgression but an enriching of art'. To follow nature simply means to follow one's disposition.² What is implied is not, as Mr. Lewis suggests, a hesitation between two kinds of epic, but a declaration for creative freedom.³ This is made more likely by the fact that whenever Milton uses a nature-art antithesis he invariably synonymizes nature with abundance. To see this we have only to turn to his description of Paradise:

Flours worthy of Paradise which not nice Art
In Beds and curious Knots, but Nature boon
Powrd forth profuse on Hill and Dale and Plaine . . .⁴

or see the same thing through the eyes of Raphael:

Into the blissful field, through Groves of Myrrhe,
And flouing Odours, Cassia, Nard, and Balme;
A Wilderness of sweets; for Nature here
Wantond as in her prime, and plaid at will
Her Virgin Fancies, *pouring* forth more sweet,
Wilde above Rule or Art; enormous bliss.⁵

This takes us back to the perversities of *Comus*:

Wherefore did Nature *Powre* her bounties forth,
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the Seas with spawn innumerable . . .⁶

and beyond all this to the ecstasy of the Creation:

About his Chariot numberless were *pour'd*
Cherub and Seraph, Potentates and Thrones,
And Vertues, winged spirits, and Chariots wing'd . . .⁷

There are of course other sanctions for this sense of richness. We can argue if we like that Milton's theory is written out for him by his over-

¹ 'Reason of Church Government', *Works*, ed. cit., vol. iii, p. 241.

² The key to Milton's meaning is not, as Mr. C. S. Lewis thinks, in Tasso (*A Preface to Paradise Lost*, 1942, pp. 5-6), but in what Milton says a few lines later: ' . . . if to the instinct of nature and the imboldning of art ought may be trusted . . .'. Hence 'nature' in this passage is synonymous with instinctive inclination. 'Imbolden' presumably means to heighten, organize, exaggerate, stress by simplification. Hence the propositions that to follow nature is to enrich one's art, and that art 'imboldens' what the instinct of nature provides, are complementary.

³ See e.g. the contrast of Art with Inclination in the Garden of Adonis, *The Faerie Queene*, III, vi, 44, and Mr. Lewis's discussion of the two terms in Spenser (*The Allegory of Love*, pp. 323-30).

⁴ *Paradise Lost*, V, 292-7.

⁵ *Paradise Lost*, IV, 241-3.

⁶ *Comus*, 709-12.

⁷ *Paradise Lost*, VII, 197-9. The italics in this and the preceding quotations are mine.

whelming awareness of fertility.¹ We can find a precedent in Spenser's Garden of Adonis. And we can find an even more important precedent in the contrast of the Garden with the Bower of Acrasia. For, as Mr. Lewis has pointed out, the characteristic of the Bower is enervation, not activity. 'There is not a kiss or an embrace in the island: only male prurience and female provocation.'² But Milton carries the identification further. For him goodness is fertility. It is based on, it flowers from the possession of the good. The antitheses we use when we discuss his writing, the stock opposition of puritan to poet, of ascetic restraint to creative luxuriance—these do not exist at the centre of his insight. Professor Haller has seized on one aspect of this truth in his insistence that Milton's puritanism confirms rather than contradicts his poetry.³ We have to extend this to its aesthetic correlative—that sensuousness is enriched not starved by discipline, and creative exuberance occasioned by self-denial.⁴ This may not help us and perhaps it did not help Milton. Poetic inspiration is a gift capriciously bestowed and not a reward for effort, however arduous, so an 'encompassing support of all the arts and sciences' may be no more to the point than a whiff of nitrous oxide. Nevertheless, in criticizing the argument we must not slip into belittling its finality. It was for Milton an 'ending end'. His whole life was an attempt to illustrate it. Consequently, if we are to accept the theory as erroneous, its continual practice is strangely obtuse. I cannot see that the theory is erroneous and the practice obtuse. Milton refuses to sport with Amarylhis because it is ordinary good sense to prefer Urania. His aim is decorum and not a dionysiac ecstasy. Where he goes wrong is not in his assertion that creative power depends upon self discipline (this is, in a way, obvious, for a man who has the bad taste to behave like a beast will evidently not have the good taste to write poetry), but in his vague conviction that the two are somehow proportional. The result is that each creative failure is made to point towards a new asceticism.⁵ 'Il Penseroso' plays with

¹ Professor Saurat was the first to draw attention to this. See also E. M. W. Tillyard, *The Miltonic Setting*, pp. 65-72, and *Paradise Regained, The Minor Poems and Samson Agonistes*, ed. M. Y. Hughes (1937), pp. xxx ff.

² C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, p. 332.

³ 'The essence of his *biographia literaria* is that when in the cultivation of his gifts he found his way to the poetry of the ancient world and the Renaissance, he found not distraction and escape from the Puritan urge to salvation and service, but the strongest possible confirmation.' (*Op. cit.*, pp. 306-7.) Again, '... he never acknowledged the war between poetry and Puritanism which may be after all nothing but the reflection of our own divided souls' (*op. cit.*, p. 289).

⁴ One notes Mr. W. H. Auden's drift in this direction: 'He [the ideal critic] will see artistic freedom and personality as dependent upon the voluntary acceptance of limitations which alone are strong enough to test the genuine intensity of the original creative impulse' (*The Intent of the Critic*, ed. D. A. Stauffer, 1941, p. 146). And compare also Arthur Barker: 'The integration of the natural and the spiritual thus conceived and the perfection of the first by the second with the increase not the loss of its peculiar glory, was to be the central aim of Milton's finest work, in prose no less than in poetry; it connoted the potent balance of his special powers' (*Milton and the Puritan Dilemma*, 1942, p. 8).

⁵ The evidence for Milton's disappointment with his poetic development is in 'How

a monk's cell. The 'Sixth Elegy' talks of living on herbs. But with 'Lycidas' Milton is beginning to 'scorn delights'. And four years later the full fury of his invective is poured out on 'libidinous and ignorant Poetasters'. In this slowly hardening intolerance, something is generated which cuts at the roots of poetic spontaneity, and inward ripeness is denied to Milton almost because of the fervour with which he pursues it.

Such marginalia however should not distract from the essential importance of what was said by Milton. Through education, through virtue, we know God. We imitate Him and therefore His Creation. We return and approach to the Nature which is His Art. If Milton's epic programme is studied under these *dicta* we can see good reasons for his writing *Paradise Lost*. Mr. Basil Willey, I am aware, has pointed to selective influences in the climate of opinion; and Dr. Tillyard and Sir Herbert Grierson have done so too in terms of Milton's biography. But there is something else besides these converging necessities. For Milton, the creation is the perfect poem. He mentions it first among his poetic intentions, he returns to it as the matrix of his utterance. All of his eloquence is shaped by its activity. Paradise is perfected by its plenitude. Hell is its parody, the causeway from Hell its burlesque. The reverberating overtones of the Fall are chaos. The atonement is a new creation, a bringing of good out of evil. Everything that the epic says and does is suffused and controlled by this central efflorescence. The organization is of course traditional: as Thibaut de Maisières points out, it is based on Hexæmeral conventions.¹ But in my interpretation of Milton's thought I have tried to display it as answering his instincts. I have treated *Paradise Lost* as summing Milton's life, as adumbrating the dilemmas of his time, as opposing the concept of nature's spirituality to the unleashed forces of an advancing mechanism. I have tried here to visualize it as flowing from the realities which are ultimate to Milton's modes of thought. True richness is born of knowledge. The bliss of nature 'wilde above Rule or Art' confirms and commemorates an intrinsic order. So too eloquence is good *because* it is passionate, because it is addressed to man in his totality, because it is 'of power beside the office of a pulpit, to in-breed and cherish in a great people the seeds of vertu and publick civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in

soon hath Time', the Epigraph to the 1637 edition of *Comus*, and in the first few lines of 'Lycidas'. It is possible to treat these as poetic gestures which have little to do with Milton's feelings, but I follow Professor Barker in thinking that this is not so. However, I cannot follow him to his conclusion that 'the controversialist in Milton was born of the frustration of the poet who seemed to see in the embattled forces in the church and state the public counterpart of the powers contending in his own mind' (*op. cit.*, p. 6).

¹ Maury Thibaut de Maisières, *Les Poèmes inspirés du Début de la Genèse à l'Époque de la Renaissance* (Louvain, 1931), *passim*. Mr. Lewis in talking of Milton's 'hesitation between the classical and the romantic types of epic' (*op. cit.*, p. 7) is surely neglecting this *genre*. See also G. McColley, 'Paradise Lost', *Harvard Theological Review*, 1939, pp. 181-235, and G. C. Taylor, *Milton's use of Du Bartas* (1934), *passim*.

right tune'.¹ Milton was thinking perhaps of his 'Arthuriad' when he said this. But *Paradise Lost* meets his definition more nobly. In setting Creation against the Angelic Fall, the Incarnation against the lapse of Eve and Adam, in this eternal pulsating rhythm of good out of evil, he discovers the framework which gives strength to his vision of poetry. Critics may see only deterioration between *Comus* and *Paradise Lost*. They may talk learnedly of the times and of tradition, and say that Milton 'long choosing' had begun too late. But it is well to admit that he could not have done otherwise; and with the prejudice of the time moving us in other directions, we are perhaps not always competent to find out what he did.

¹ 'Reason of Church Government', *Works*, ed. cit., vol. iii, p. 238.

IS THE DEVIL AN ASS?¹

By S. MUSGROVE

Since the publication of Mr. C. S. Lewis's *Preface to Paradise Lost* at least three critics: Professor Stoll,² Mr. G. R. Hamilton,³ and Professor Waldock,⁴ have attempted to combat his views (the first two with special reference to Satan) by criticisms which, in effect, restate the position held by Raleigh and other moderates of the romantic⁵ critical tradition. All of them would, I imagine, assent to Macaulay's summary of the Satanic character:

Against the sword of Michael, against the thunder of Jehovah, against the flaming lake . . . against the prospect of an eternity of unintermitted misery, his spirit bears up unbroken, resting on its own innate energies, requiring no support from any thing external, nor even from hope itself.⁶

In this article I shall endeavour to examine Milton's presentation of Satan more closely than Mr. Lewis was able to do in his book, and while in general inclining to his point of view, to disagree with him on some matters of importance, and to suggest certain factors which I believe have been overlooked.

It is difficult for those who follow Mr. Lewis's lead to touch hands with the romantic critics, because the preliminary assumptions made by each are so widely different. Put briefly, one could say that the romantic critics expect the figures in *Paradise Lost* to behave like human beings as we know them, whereas in fact they are either superhuman or abhuman. The basis of complaint against God is that he does not behave like a Benevolent Despot; against Adam and Eve before the fall that they do not behave as though they were fallen; and against Satan that, after starting (apparently)

¹ Owing to the long delay in mails to Australia the author has been unable to read the proof.—[Ed. R.E.S.].

² 'Give the Devil His Due', *R.E.S.*, April 1944.

³ *Hero or Fool? A Study of Milton's Satan* (Allen and Unwin), 1944.

⁴ 'Mr. C. S. Lewis and *Paradise Lost*', *Australian English Association*, Sept. 1943. I am indebted to Professor Waldock for many criticisms of the original form of this article. Our fundamental disagreement on Miltonic problems has not affected the generous and illuminating quality of his comments.

⁵ I have throughout used the term 'romantic' to cover the school of criticism which starts (in its extreme form) with Blake and Shelley, continues throughout the nineteenth century, and is still vigorously alive in the work, for instance, of the three critics mentioned. I do not mean to imply by it anything beyond membership of this broad critical tradition.

⁶ *Essays* (Longmans, Green and Co.) 1899, p. 13.

as a Byronic rebel, he fails to continue on the same level. But, of course, none of these characters should be expected to behave thus, since they are not human. More particularly, of Satan, one meets the complaint that Milton does not *prove* that he is evil at all, in the same way as Lady Macbeth, say, or any other human figure, is proved, by artistic demonstration, to be evil; that, in fact, Milton first presents Satan in his most splendid guise, and then proceeds to pile on details which are not consistent with this first impression; that the splendour is proved artistically, but not the evil. The answer is that Milton does not need to prove that Satan is evil; he expects his readers to know it and to believe it from the start. This presumption is made not merely on religious grounds, though religious faith in the reader is assumed; but is well based on classical and neo-classical literary theory. The case is that mentioned by Horace at ll. 120 ff. of the *Ars Poetica*: the character whose essential features are already fixed, by human consent, for all time. The poet does not have to prove that Achilles is 'iracundus', or Ino 'flebilis'; his reader already knows that, and the poet has only to show his character acting in accordance with the preconception.¹ The presence of such a presumption does not, of course, excuse the poet from making his character either consistent with the presumption itself, or self-coherent; but it means that he is assured of a certain attitude of mind in the reader, and he need not labour, as the novelist must, to produce that attitude by his own efforts. [So with Satan; the reader must hate, or be prepared to hate, Satan before the poem starts, because he already knows that he is evil and proud. The romantic critics of Satan, that is, start at the wrong point; they begin where the poem begins, allow themselves to be convinced by the poetry of Books I and II that here is the 'real' Satan, and then complain that the Satan of the later books does not fit with this picture. But if the reader starts with a good morning's hate of Satan before reading the poem, the Satan of Books I and II falls into place as only *part* of the whole portrait—and, as we shall see, a very deceptive part. It is the failure to realize this that has led to the heavy emphasis which the romantic critics have always placed on the Satan of Books I and II, while neglecting the figure seen in the later books;] Professor Stoll's illustrative quotations, for instance, are drawn almost entirely from the first two books, with an occasional excursion into the sun-speech at IV, 32 ff. Moreover, this school of criticism tends to judge Satan exclusively on what he says, forgetting what he does and what happens to him; one wonders if in real life such critics accept every man's proclaimed valuation of himself. In a narrative poem like *Paradise Lost*, one

¹ Horace mentions an alternative possibility, that the writer may construct a quite new view of the character; in which case, he is advised only to be consistent throughout. But for Milton, a basically new view of Satan's essential character was forbidden by his religion.

must judge (as in a novel, *mutatis mutandis*) not merely by a character's opinion of himself, but by other people's opinion of him, and by his actions as well as his sufferings. After all, he may be a liar; as Satan patently is. Our estimate of Achilles is certainly affected by his action in dragging Hector's body before the Trojan walls; we do not remember merely his eloquent magnanimity towards Priam. Finally, the romantics too often fail to note the *context* of any given piece of character-revelation. In other words they ask the question, 'Does Satan appear magnificent?' but not the further question 'In what circumstances does he appear magnificent?' Critics of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* often forget to ask the same question, and so fail to see Caesar's essentially histrionic and hollow nature.

The romantic concept of Satan, then, is based on the Satan of Books I and II; here (without going into detail) is

the unconquerable Will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield . . . (I, 106-8)

Mr. Lewis, attacking his enemy at his strongest point, tries to show that Satan, even in I and II, is intellectually slipshod, and in some ways ludicrous. On a basis of pure ratiocination, I think he succeeds; but his success is vain. One can admit everything he says in Satan's disfavour; accept his 'inaccuracy' and his 'incessant autobiography'; grant that he is pride incarnate, and that pride, to Milton's theology, is the greatest and deadliest of the Deadly Sins; realize that in Book II he stoops to shoddy political manoeuvring; and still the sense of glory remains. Addison himself—and he can hardly be charged with a romantic bias—judges of the creature he calls a 'crafty being' (*Spectator*, No. 273) that

the whole part of this great enemy of mankind is filled with such incidents as are very apt to raise and terrify the reader's imagination . . . there is no single passage in the whole poem worked up to a greater sublimity, than that wherein his person is described . . . (*Spectator*, No. 303)

The fact is that in each of us there is enough of unregenerate man to thrill at the Arch Rebel defying omnipotence, and though our better logic and our better conscience cry 'Wrong' and 'Evil', the imagination still blazes with Satan's fiery grandeur. But to let this opening splendour dazzle our eyes for the rest of the poem is a mistake; and it is also a mistake to refrain from asking the question posed earlier: 'In what circumstances does Satan appear magnificent?' The answer is so obvious that it is surprising that more attention has not been paid to it: in Hell. Satan's opening magnificence, that is, owes its existence to the fact that he is seen against the background which suits him best. Evil *can* seem magnificent—against a background of evil, for evil is essentially false; but, as we shall see, it

ceases to be magnificent, except in flashes, when its native setting of smoke and flame is removed.

I think that this is how Milton intended his Satan of the opening section to appear; if he did not mean his reader to feel the grandeur of the creature, to a degree enough to be shocking, then the romantics are right, and he was carried away by his own concept against his better will. He probably also meant the more astute of his readers to see, as Mr. Lewis sees, the indefensibility of his intellectual position; but he did not intend that, *at this stage*, his intellectual absurdity should remove the more prevailing impression of grandeur. On the other hand, he did not intend that this original impression should remain in our minds, unchanged, throughout the whole poem; rather, he startles us by the contrast between this first Satan and the later Satan: between evil seen by the glare of evil and by the light of Heaven.

In point of fact, Milton does not leave his readers in such a posture of puzzled admiration of Satan as the preceding paragraphs would indicate; for the grand rebellion of the speeches is not allowed to pass uncensured. Milton gives a kind of muted running commentary (especially in Book I) which consistently suggests that the prevailing impression of grandeur is false. For instance, the opening lines after the exordium (27-58), delivered almost *in propria persona*, give Milton's own opinion of 'obdurate pride and stedfast hate', for pride is the greatest of the seven deadly sins. Then, significantly, after his very first speech, Satan is described as 'racked with deep despair' (126)—and despair is the unforgiveable sin. Comparisons of the fallen angels with the 'Memphian chivalry' who pursued the chosen people (307), the plague of locusts (338), and the barbarians who overthrew Rome (351), all increase the effect of the suggestion of falsehood in the dominant impression. [It is true that this running commentary does remain, in these books, subservient to the impression of grandeur; because, I think, Milton wished Satan, at this stage of the poem, to hold the centre of the stage. He had ample reasons for this. First, as I have suggested above, he wished to shock his readers into attention by the contrast between evil seen by the light of an evil background and evil seen later in the true light of Heaven; second, there is the literary reason, of plunging *in medias res*; thirdly, and most important, Milton has the same reason as God in his 'high permission'—that Satan might present an appearance of grandeur and greatness in order, later, the more heavily to 'heap on himself damnation'. All this is on the good old empirical principle, 'the bigger they are, the harder they fall'; and the romantic misconception could only come about through failure to see that the later parts of the portrait are as vital to the whole as this deliberately planned beginning.]

Milton, in fact, comes out into the open very soon; for Satan's degradation begins at Hell-gate (II, 745 ff.). Putting aside all preconceptions, and

granting that the allegorical figures of Sin and Death are not fully personalized, we must yet feel the staggering contrast with what we have just seen of the Prince of Darkness when we learn that, while still in Heaven, he has been guilty of incest (765-7). Then, the speech in which he reveals his intentions to Sin and Death (817 ff.) is the first in which the unheroic falsehood of the creature is allowed to peep out for a moment. 'The foul Scylla is 'dear Daughter', the shapeless Death 'My fair son . . . the dear pledge of dalliance'. There is no dignity in Satan's attitude to the pair; he is almost excusing himself to feared and acknowledged superiors; and he placates their grim menace by promise of food, food, food. The contact with these foul beings befouls Satan (the greater Satan) himself; but he is forced to come down to their level. Evil is exposing its littleness, though the revelation is as yet only partial. Then Satan leaves Hell, magnificently, on 'Sail-broad Vannes' (927)—and what happens? He falls ten thousand feet into an air-pocket, and is then blown sky-high by a wandering cloud, he stumbles through bogs, he 'wades or creeps or flies'. His adventures in this section are, in fact, semi-comic; allied (to put it crudely) to slipping on a banana-skin. [Milton is deliberately opening a series of denigrating incidents, in order to minimize in our eyes what has gone before and to prepare us for what comes after. And is it not the ultimate insult that the cloud which saves him from eternal fall is placed there by *chance*? Not God by 'permission', not courage or pride or aspiration saves Satan; merely bad luck.]

It may be argued that such incidents are not part of Satan's character at all; but they are part of Milton's presentation of him. By a series of such minutiae, occurring consistently whenever Satan appears, [Milton implants in his reader's mind (if his reader is fully attentive) a growing doubt of the validity of his original impression of grandeur.] Let us follow his further adventures.

Satan lands on the terrestrial universe at III, 422, and the first thing to which he is compared is a Vulture (431). Next, it is more than a mere coincidence that Milton should take lengthy pains to make it clear that the place where Satan lands is (496) the Paradise of Fools. The first emotion attributed to him in this universe is envy (553), as the first on earth itself is rage (IV, 9); and his first positive action is to disguise himself (634). The culmination of these pinpricks counts, finally; it is unnecessary to say more about them.

But the time has not yet come for the complete exposure. As Book IV opens, we are allowed to see Satan in one of his greater moments again. The great speech (32 ff.) written for the early dramatic draft, is so very good *by itself* that it provides plenty of ammunition for romantic quotation. But placed in its context it looks rather different. It is delivered in the face of

light, the noonday sun, and light is the attribute of God. Satan has not yet lost all his 'original brightness', all his angelic nature, and this earthly effulgence, type and symbol of the celestial, calls up in him, for the moment, his remnants of good. Just as Book III had opened with Milton's own prayer for the true light of divinity, this corresponding opening of IV is the damned soul's cry to the lesser light that is, none the less, a type of the eternal beam which stirs in him 'bitter memorie of what he was' (24-5). This presence of light has an effect on Satan which deserves notice: it reveals him, for the moment, to himself. The speech discloses more self-knowledge than any of the great speeches in I and II. He knows now, and for the moment, that pride is his sin (50 ff.); he knows that had he been, even, an 'inferiour Angel' (59) this same pride would have caused him to follow, if not to lead, the revolt; he knows, finally, that if he repented, pride would make history repeat itself (94 ff.), and bring him again to where he now stands, damned in the merciless eye of the sun.

The speech does, of course, stir our imagination, but in a subtly different way from those in I and II; Satan, one may say, is disintegrating. Whereas in the earlier speeches he could yet maintain an unbroken front of spurious glory, an apparent unity, we feel now that he is being torn apart by the strains of being evil. His remnants of good shine out for the moment, before being quenched for ever; he sees the truth for a moment, and recoils from it upon his lower self: 'Which way I flie is Hell; my self am Hell' (75). He cannot, as it were, build up his own false truth any more; that is why there is such a difference from earlier lines like:—

Hail, horrors, hail,
Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell
Receive thy new Possessor; One who brings
A mind not to be changed by Place or Time. (I, 250 ff.)

The precise point is, of course, that his mind *is* changing.

The speech over, the denigration begins again. Mr. Lewis has pointed out the function of the 'fishie fume' of 168; then Satan is the 'grand Thief' (192); he lands on the Tree of Life; black, ugly, and baneful—a Cormorant (196). He is empty of delight where all around him is delight (286); and so on. This descent continues in his next speech (358 ff.), spoken at the first sight of Adam and Eve; it is a speech which has been much misunderstood. It begins in a way which recalls the sun-speech, and Satan is even moved to say of Adam and Eve:

whom my thoughts pursue
With wonder, and could love, so lively shines
In them divine resemblance. (362-4)

For those who would save the Devil's face this is a favourite passage, and it is usually paraphrased¹ as though Satan had said simply: 'I love Adam

¹ For instance, by Raleigh, *Milton* (Arnold), 1915, pp. 137-8.

and Eve.' What he does say is something quite different: that he *could* love them *because* of their likeness to God. To take the last point first: it is not the human creatures themselves who call up Satan's emotion, but their resemblance to the divine. That is, the memory of God and Heaven is still working in him, as in the sun-speech; and that half-forgotten glory, not Adam and Eve, is the object of Satan's fading affections. The implications of the 'could' we may leave for the moment, and note merely that the elevated tone of these opening lines, which, past denial, does recall the tones of the sun-speech, is not sustained for more than eight lines. The upward aspiration is far more quickly exhausted now than it was in the sun-speech. At line 366 ('Ah, gentle pair . . .') there is a clear change of tone; a descent, in fact, from agonized memory to falseness which contrasts sharply with what has gone before. All is now bitter irony hiding (or revealing) bottomless cruelty:

League with you I seek
And mutual amitie so streight, so close,
That I with you must dwell, or you with me
Henceforth. . . .

The tone, in this second part, is in fact reminiscent of a stage-villain's soliloquy; it has the ghastly hollowness of some of Richard III's speeches; the 'Ah!', one may say, is almost 'Aha!'. I am surprised that Mr. Hamilton, Professor Stoll, and Raleigh all seem to miss this change of tone, and that they are ready to accept Satan's next piece of window-dressing—his 'pittie' for Adam and Eve—at its face value:

yet no purpos'd foe
To you whom I could pittie thus forlorne
Though I unpittied. (373-5)

This is as sound as a rotten nut. The man who complains that 'Nobody is sorry for me' is amply sorry for himself, and I cannot see why the same should not be true of Satan. Again, these words are often misrepresented, as though Satan had said that he *did* pity Adam and Eve. What he does say is that he *could* pity them, just as he had claimed that he *could* love the divine resemblance in them. If this 'could' is not the attitudinizing of the self-pitying self-dramatiser, I do not know what is. To luxuriate in the inner mimesis of an emotion which one knows one will never really feel, to taste a lying virtue for the feel of it on the emotional palate, is a notorious posture of the defeated egotist. The passage is, in fact, one of the first examples of something we shall note again later on: Satan is beginning, not merely to tell lies, but to tell lies to himself. It is, I think, significant that Johnson, discussing the pathetic element in the poem, does not mention either Satan's 'love' or 'pity';¹ contrast the romantic critics, with

¹ *Lives of the Poets*, ed. G. B. Hill, vol. i, p. 180.

whom the passage is almost a *locus classicus*. And is it merely coincidence that Satan takes on the shape of a beast (397) immediately afterwards?

The purpose of the peeping Tom episode (502 ff.) is clear enough; in the speech which follows (505 ff.) is further evidence of the downward path. This is manifested here not in Satan's obvious sexual jealousy, though that is bad enough in a divine creature, but in the fact that he is again telling lies to himself. Satan, having heard for the first time of the veto on the Tree of Knowledge, asks:

Knowledge forbidden?
Suspicious, reasonless. Why should thir Lord
Envie them that? Can it be sin to know . . . ?
. . . Hence will I excite thir minds
With more desire to know, and to reject
Envious commands, invented with designe
To keep them low whom knowledge might exalt
Equal with Gods . . .

(515 ff.)

Now Satan knows (or knew) well enough that envy and a positive desire for suppression are not and cannot be parts of God's nature, which is wholly good, but these are arguments which could well be used to play on the credulous ignorance of Adam and Eve. But, as Milton's syntactical arrangement shows, these thoughts pass through Satan's mind not merely as possible arguments he might use, but as partly this, and partly Satan's own genuine reflections on the matter. It is doubtful, for instance, whether the clause, 'invented with designe to keep them low . . .' would go into Latin as a subjunctive or an indicative clause—as a false supposition or as a fact; and likewise the ejaculatory phrases at the beginning of the quotation are vague enough in their syntactical relationship to pass as either what Satan believes or what he wants to make Adam and Eve believe. That is, Satan has reached a point where he is ready to believe that the arguments he is going to use are in reality true; Satan is beginning to believe his own propaganda.

At his next appearance (800) Milton again injects that sense of shock we have observed earlier—Satan is 'squat like a Toad', and this is the ugliest thing that has yet been said of him. There follows the encounter with Gabriel (based, probably, on an early dramatic draft), and here, for a moment, it seems as though the old grand defiance and splendour had come back. But there is a difference; in I and II Satan's desperate grandeur had been accompanied by an apparent wealth of intellectual activity, which, false though it was, sufficed to gloss over the surface. Now this veneer has gone; as we have just seen, Satan has reached the stage of fooling himself with his own lies, a state not conducive to intellectual integrity. Thus, his first speech to Gabriel in this section (885 ff.), after its

opening gesture of defiance, sinks abruptly to a conclusion which is indeed 'lame and impotent':

The rest is true, they found me where they say;
But that implies not violence or harme.

This is a mere whim, as even the romantic critics have to admit. Furthermore, the discrepancy between the account of his motive for breaking bounds in this speech and the account in the one following (925 ff.) is glaring; Gabriel pounces on it at once, and denounces Satan as 'a lyar trac't' (949). The difference between this passage and the opening books is that the intellectual absurdity is now so unmistakable that it almost prevails over the grandeur of defiance. Satan still possesses this grandeur; but that is all he has left now. The plausible intellectual facade of 'liberty' and 'pride' and 'will'—this has vanished with the background of evil that invested it with its spurious magnificence. Satan is now merely the cornered rebel; he can submit and die, or make a gesture and die. He chooses the latter, and his gesture is superb; but divine intervention saves him from annihilation. And, again because of our unregenerate humanity, we receive his gesture with a thrill of reluctant sympathy; but, if our response is readier than when we saw him 'pitying' mankind, it is far less than that vault of imagination with which we beheld him in the smoky halls of pandemonium.

Satan's earlier biography, as given in V and VI, tells against the romantic view. If that view is right, it is surely now, in the first daring of revolt, with his nature hardly as yet impaired, that Satan should stand forth, even greater as an imaginative figure than in I or II. What we do find is very different. Take first (to clear the ground) his intellectual position. In these later books its inconsistencies are more blatant than in I or II; because (I emphasize it again) the background is the light of Heaven and not the flames of Hell. For the speeches at V, 769 and 850 I need only refer to Mr. Lewis's analysis, which seems to me impeccable. Those in VI are no better. To call Abdiel 'seditious' (152) is plain nonsense; at 291 we discover that the actual conclusion of the great adventure may be to 'turn this Heav'n itself into . . . Hell'—a process hard to justify by any reasoning; and his words of cheer to his fellows (418 ff.) are riddled with contradictions; they are first 'now known in Armes not to be overpower'd', then the fight is described as having been 'doubtful', then they have suffered 'some disadvantage', and finally, the enemy is admitted to be 'superior'. What could be more patent?

Satan as intellectual, then, is no more defensible in Heaven than elsewhere; what of the earlier grandeur? I find none of this here. In fact, the imaginative atmosphere which clings about Satan in Heaven is exactly that which clings about the other angels, fallen or unfallen, as about the Deity

himself: chilly and somehow unconvincing. Satan even shares God's heavy sarcasm. He performs the sort of warlike deeds one would expect—good, but not as good as Michael's; and in the speeches he and Michael speak the same dialect. There is no more enkindling warmth about one than the other; the only difference being that Satan is hopelessly wrong in his intellectual position. Most critics have found this uncomfortable atmosphere forbidding, an imaginative failure; with this I agree, with certain qualifications, only remarking that Milton was not, of course, aware of it as such. Now, if we remember that this chilly, angelic Satan exists in the context of Heaven, of the light of truth, the corollary will be interesting. It follows that Satan, who, as yet, has only taken the first step to ruin, is not yet in the externals of attitude or appearance very different from the other angels; and that internally he differs from them only in intellectual error (a tremendous gulf, of course) and not yet in imaginative posture. This is what one would expect in the circumstances; and again we come back to our original point, that Satan as a gigantic figure of imaginative grandeur, as something different in spirit from the other angels, does not exist until he is in Hell; that Satan's 'greatness' and 'individuality' depend upon the existence of Hell for their own existence (90).¹

In VII (save for a passing reference) and VIII there is no mention of Satan; the creation and man's earliest history are both incorrupt. He reappears at IX, 48 ff., and Milton is quick to establish his two principal features; he has become more malicious in the interim (54-5) and he is 'fearless' (57). This agrees with our last (chronological) view of Satan, at the end of IV, where we judged him to have nothing left of his 'great' qualities save defiance. At 99 ff. Milton allows him the only 'great' speech he is henceforward to deliver, outside Hell. Now, in narrative technique, there is an excellent reason why Satan should appear comparatively 'great' at this moment; for four books we have seen him worsted or forgotten, and Adam's dignity and wisdom have been the theme. But Satan is soon to overthrow Adam; therefore probability demands his temporary magnification. The 'context', then, in this restricted sense, yields ample reason for Satan's importance at this point; but there is far more to it than that. Of all the 'great' speeches of Satan this one certainly rouses least sympathy in the reader; there is no pretence of 'love' or 'pittie', as in the past. The mask is off, and evil is revealed. Satan has reached the state where he does not

hope to be my self less miserable
By what I seek, but others to make such
As I, though thereby worse to me redound,
For only in destroying I find ease . . . (126 ff.)

¹ I do not agree with the objection that what comes first in the poem should necessarily come first in one's view of Satan's development. The wars in Heaven, of which Satan's

And the conclusion has the snap of cornered desperation: '... spite then with spite is best repaid' (178). In fact, what stirs the imagination in this speech is the cry of a vast misery; one might say paradoxically, that it is a misery that is hardly articulate, so boundless it is. And this is all that remains of the grand design; even the courage, the last defiance are now only endless misery. Now, a consideration of the context (Satan's, not, as above, Milton's) will show why Satan should make, at this moment, another 'great' speech, and why this speech should be the agonizing cry it is. The speech is, in fact, closely parallel to the sun-speech at the beginning of IV; each is a speech made in, and largely to, light, and (as we saw) light, the type of the eternal, momentarily stirs in Satan what is 'best' in him. But there is a difference; the speech in IV was a speech in and to the sun; this speech is made at midnight (58). But it is none the less a speech to light, into which Satan has just emerged from seven nights' continued darkness (62-3):

Terrestrial Heav'n, danc't round by other Heav'ns
That shine, yet bear thir bright officious Lamps,
Light above Light, for thee alone, as seems,
In thee concentrating all thir precious beams
Of sacred influence: as God in Heav'n
Is Center, yet extends to all, so thou
Centring receav'st from all those Orbs . . . (103 ff.)

(Note the comparison between God and the point where light is focused.) The speech is, in fact, a starlight speech as the other is a sunlight speech; and in that the difference lies. One could say that the lights are going out for Satan; of the earlier effulgence only the fragmentary light of stars is left, glorious as these are. A like flood of darkness is flowing over his inner self. So, in this, his last great moment, his striving upwards towards God is less than in the earlier speeches. As I have already said, the sheer evil in him is growing steadily more predominant; one may add that the same intellectual falseness is still there, no less blatant than before. Thus, Earth is now preferred to Heaven (99-100), a 'third' of Heaven's host has grown to 'wel'nigh half' (141), and, in one and the same speech, Adam is head of creation (113), a 'base original' (150) and a 'Man of Clay' (176). Yet, at the end, light brings again a flash of self-knowledge comparable to that in the sun-speech—in the passage beginning 'O foul descent . . .' (163). The reality here revealed accords with the estimate made earlier, that nothing is now left of the former Satan save an instinct to fight it out;

earlier biography forms part, are a 'hysteron-proteron' comparable with Aeneas's narrative at the court of Dido; and the function of that device is not merely variety, but to set the whole narrative in proper perspective. This may often lead to an alteration of earlier (incomplete) estimates of theme or character.

and Satan's momentary realization of this is the cause of the permanent sense of misery and degradation which now clings to him:

But what will not Ambition and Revenge
Descend to? . . .

. . . Revenge, at first though sweet,
Bitter ere long back on itself recoiles. (168 ff.)

At this speech our imagination may be stirred, but the stirring will be one of repulsion; here is no grandeur, no splendour, not even so much as active defiance, for this has sunk to 'revenge'; only evil, sheer evil, moaning out of a universe of self-created misery.

Satan reappears at l. 412. For the rest of the book the only passage which requires comment is ll. 457-67 in which Satan, at the sight of Eve, is 'abstracted from his own evil' and for the moment remains 'stupidly good'. It should not be necessary to do more than point to the context in order to remove any misconception here. The thing that is emphasized is not Satan's goodness, but Eve's beauty; the miracle is that Eve, 'veil'd in a Cloud of Fragrance', is so ineffably lovely that *even* Satan forgets his evil—for a moment. That phrase 'stupidly good', applied to Satan as he stands 'abstracted' from his own evil, and stripped of all his evil passions, is no stumbling block, if 'stupid' is taken in its seventeenth century sense of 'destitute of sensation, consciousness, thought or feeling'.¹ I do not agree with Mr. Williams² if he means what he seems to mean—that the phrase ascribes to Satan a permanent condition of 'idiocy'; its meaning is rather that *at this moment*, when all that is evil is charmed out of Satan, there is nothing left; he is 'stupid' in the sense in which Bacon describes the grave as 'stupid': utterly non-sentient. In this non-sentience lies Satan's only mode of being 'good', for his only positive qualities are evil ones. Johnson, in his Dictionary (s.v. 'stupidly') cites this example under the heading (separate from the normal usage, 'dully') of 'with suspension or inactivity of understanding', which comes near to the interpretation I give the phrase. Admittedly, the interpretation is somewhat fine-drawn; one would feel less hesitant about it if Milton had laid a heavier emphasis on the phrase. There is nothing in the phrase itself or the context to make it unlikely; but one would have expected such a point to be made, if made at all, with more clarity and at greater length. But, in any case, whether this interpretation, or the more common one—'in consequence of stupefaction'—is correct, the emphasis of the whole passage is on Eve's beauty, not Satan's alleged 'goodness'.

The short speech which follows (473 ff.) only repeats, as far as Satan's character is concerned, the longer 'starlight' speech at the beginning of the

¹ O.E.D., s.v. 'stupid'.

² *The English Poems of John Milton* (World's Classics ed.) Introduction, p. xv.

book. The loveliness of the Serpent (504) is of course only an external covering for the 'inmate bad'; and the speeches of temptation (532 ff.), astute and false as Satan himself, reveal nothing of his character; they are all mask, *persona*. It is worth noting that as he approaches the ultimate evil Satan feels two of the few positive emotions not specifically bad attributed to him in the later parts of the poem: hope and joy (633). This again suggests that by this time all that remains positive in Satan is evil. Finally, after Eve has fallen, Satan slinks away 'to the thicket' without, it seems, the courage or spirit even to exalt.

The last scene of all for Satan is the return to Hell at X, 325 ff. Now here Satan recovers some (by no means all) of his earlier glory, especially at 447 ff., where he slowly emerges upon his fellows, a 'shape Starr-bright'. Again, the reason is clear: he is back in Hell where evil is permitted to take on an illusory glory. But there is a difference from I and II; Satan is not only less magnificent (his gradual descent is cause enough for that) but he is altered in quality also. Then, all was daring and desperate peril; now there is a superficies of triumphant achievement. It is for this reason that Satan's speeches in this section take on something of the tone of God's in Heaven, and in fact that in which Sin and Death (383 ff.) are sent as his vice-regents into the world is almost a parody of the despatch of the Son on His Divine mission. The illusion, that is, is different in kind; destruction bears the false face of creation. But it is not permitted to last; reality strikes down through the fog of smoke distortion, and the devils, reduced like Settle to hiss in their own dragons, are cast down in a final indignity and a final ugliness. The romantic critics complain, of course, that this scene is the final and most outrageous injustice piled on the head of their magnificent Satan. But it is necessary for the completion of the picture of Hell. The degradation into serpent form, the lowest thing that exists, is the retort by truth to illusion; this, and not the spurious archangelic dream of Books I and II, is the reality—or at least a shape that symbolizes the reality. It is the death of any possible hope that existed in the earlier Hell.

Summing it all up, I find Truth where she is usually to be found, tripping modestly down the 'middle way'. Satan is neither the nincompoop seen by Mr. Lewis, nor the Prometheus of Shelley and Macaulay. We should give full assent to the picture of Satan's intellectual hollowness, as seen by the former; but surely Mr. Lewis of all people should know that the intellectual impression is only part of the total impression left by any poetic experience. [Satan's initial grandeur is too great to be dismissed on the point of a non-sequitur; if we are not stirred by it, against our reason and against our will, we are missing the titanic proportions of the struggle between good and evil. Nevertheless, after that original concept built up

in I and II, the figure begins to shrink and darken. We do not thereafter behold a straight and unswerving line of degradation, a *facilis descensus*; truth is not so simple as that. The motion is rather wave-like, one in which troughs and peaks alternate, but the general motion is downwards, until, finally, the grand endeavour collapses in a hissing, in dead sea fruit. And it is to be noted that for every peak, for every momentary recovery in Satan's development, there is a specific and particular reason; but the general downward tendency needs no such specific causation; it comes, as it were, by nature. As in the void, Satan's natural motion is downwards; it is only the 'chance' of passing air-currents which lift him, momentarily, towards light and the memory of what he was.

It is, of course, possible to argue that the original impression left by Milton's first two books is so strong that no subsequent denigration can remove it; but I do not think that this is so, if the whole concept is held in mind. [The Satan of the first two books, even if magnificent against that particular background, is still intellectually rotten and is still evil incarnate; we must start, as I remarked earlier, by hating Satan before the poem opens. Therefore, no matter what tribute of admiration our unregenerate nature pays to his magnificence, it must be paid with reluctance; paid with a sense of seeing his black evil, and yet being unable to refuse the response of imaginative thrill. If there is in our attitude to Satan this constant pulling back, as I think there must be, when we see him in the real light of day and of Heaven, reason will rise to perform its proper function, and, looking back, we shall say: 'This, then, is what I felt to be so great; my inner feeling of discomfort—my conscience—was right after all.' The most fruitful line of argument against the unity of the portrait (and, essentially, the whole of modern Miltonic criticism is a battle for, or against, the oneness or consistency of the Miltonic idea) would perhaps be that Milton, though he has accompanied Satan's inner descent and diminution by a series of parallel, and degrading external incidents, has yet not kept the two processes wholly in step. My impression is (though space forbids a detailed inquiry) that the inner and outer emphases are not, as it were, consistently synchronized. But even if that is true, it is a fault in detail only; the general outline of degenerating evil, of the dissipation of the fog of illusion under the light of reality, remains clear and beyond mistake.

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

SEAFARER, Lines 97-102

MS (Exeter Book):

peah þe græf wille golde stregan
broþor his geborenum byrgan be deadum
mapmum mislicum þæt hine mid wille
100 ne mæg þære sawle þe biþ synna ful
gold to geoce for godes egsan
þonne he hit ær hydeð þenden he her leofað.

As I am concerned only with the subject matter of this disputed passage, I need not settle the exact words of the text, or examine alternative ways of construing them, which would be more perplexing if *byrgan* were not restricted in early use to the burial of bodies. To get a provisional translation, I make two large assumptions:— (i) that the text as originally composed made consecutive sense; and (ii) that the original text is substantially preserved, so that the *crux* in 99^b is not due to a considerable lacuna, and 102 is not a later addition. Even then it seems necessary to patch up the *crux* by supplying a negative, e.g., *þæt hine mid ne wile* (or *nile*), translating: 'Although a brother will strew with gold the grave of his brother born, bury (him) beside the dead with all kinds of treasures,— *that* will not go with him; nor can gold be a help to the sinful soul against the dread (judgment) of God, when he hides it beforehand while he lives here (on earth).'

Now compare Psalm 48 in the Roman version (the Gallican or Hebrew would serve): 7-9 'Qui confidunt in virtute sua quique in abundantia diuitiarum suarum gloriabuntur. Frater non redemit, redemit homo; non dabit Deo placationem suam, nec pretium redemptionis animae suae . . .' 12 'Et relinquent alienis diuitias suas; et sepulchra eorum domus eorum in aeternum . . .' 18 'Quoniam non cum morietur accipiet haec omnia, neque simul descendit cum eo gloria domus eius.'

The ideas are the same, and coincidence is the less likely because the Psalter was at that time the best known of all books. I doubt if it would be profitable to explore the learned commentators who have occupied themselves with the obscurities of this psalm. But the explanatory rendering of verse 8 in the tenth century West Saxon version of the Psalms (ed. Bright, 1907) from the Paris Psalter is worth quoting:—

. . . þæt nan broðor oþres sawle nele alysan of helle, ne ne mæg, peah he wylle, gif he sylf nanwuht nyle, ne ne deð to goode þa hwile þe he her byð. Gylde for þy him sylf and alyse his sawle þa hwyle ðe he her sy; forþam se broðor oþpe nyle oððe ne mæg, gif he sylf na ne onginð to tilianne þæt he þæt weorð agife to alysnesse his sawle.

Hear the idea of lines 100-102 is adumbrated. It was favoured by the Church for practical reasons, and it is clear in a Latin Argument to Ps. 48 which is found in the Paris Psalter and elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon times:—'. . . ne saeculi diuitias magni pendant, sed pro his potius, si forte adfluant, Deo gratias referant, *easque pro aeterna requie dispensent*.'

Among all the uncertainties that beset the composition of *Seafarer*, any crumb of fact has some value. It seems sure that lines 97-102 should be interpreted, not as a survival from heathendom, but as an echo of Psalm 48. This result must not be taken to confirm the patched reading of 99^b, which, like the other attempts at emendation, is unnatural Old English. More extensive corruption in the transmitted text is the probable explanation of the crux.

KENNETH SISAM.

'CHEVISAUNCE' AS A FLOWER NAME

Professor Wrenn, in a recent essay,¹ has drawn attention once more to the beautiful passage in the April Eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender*:

Bring hether the Pincke and purple Cullambine
With Gelliflowres;
Bring Coronations, and Sops in wine,
Worne of Paramoures:
Strowe me the ground with Daffadowndillies,
And Cowslips, and Kingcups, and loved Lillies:
The pretie Pawnce,
And the Chevisaunce,
Shall match with the fayre flowre Delice.

It seems to him that all the subtle magic of Spenser's art is concentrated in that mysterious flower-name 'chevisaunce'. Mysterious it certainly is, for it has never been identified. Spenser never elsewhere used the word as a possible flower-name and the only other instance of its use in a similar passage, obviously imitative, occurs in a poem by T. Robinson, *The Life and Death of Mary Magdalene*, c. 1621.² The Magdalene and her lover enter the Garden of Pleasure, and in suitably lush language the poet writes:

The Damaske-roses heere were brought a bed,
Just opposite y^e Lilie of y^e Vale:
The Rose, to see y^e Lilie white, wax'd red;
To see y^e Rose so red, y^e Lilie pale;
While Zephyre fann'd them with a gentler gale.
The woody Primrose and the pretty Paunce,
The Pinke, y^e Daffodill and Chevisaunce,
All in Perfumed sets, y^e fragrant heads advance.

I hesitate to differ from Professor Wrenn, who follows the *O.E.D.* in

¹ *Essays and Studies of the English Association*, vol. xxix, 1943.

² Ed. for the E.E.T.S. by H. O. Sommer, 1899.

the matter—accepting the word as a flower name completing the traditional pastoral catalogue—and it is with the greatest diffidence that I make the ensuing suggestions.

The word is not uncommon in Middle English. Chaucer and Langland use it in the sense of the raising of funds or furnishing of funds, money-lending on security, or dealing for profit. It is used four times in the poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, once in the sense of 'achieving' (l. 1939), and in the other three instances as 'booty', 'spoils'. It is not entirely unlikely that Spenser knew the W. Midland poem, in his time preserved in manuscript in a Yorkshire library. Stories of Gawain had an invincible popularity, and as late as 1569 Edward Fenton was inveighing against those 'whose great pleasure was in the trifeling tales of Gawin' (*Certaine Secrete Wonders of Nature*). Of these M.E. senses the one most pertinent here is the *Gawain* one of 'booty' or 'spoils'. I believe this is the sense in which Spenser used the word. The lines:

The pretie Pawnce,
And the Chevisaunce,
Shall match with the fayre flowre Delice.

as I understand them mean that the pretty, but humble pansy and all the rest of what one would expect the eighteenth-century poets to call 'the flowery spoils', a phrase which exactly conveys the sense I think is intended here, combine to match in beauty the 'fayre flowre Delice'.

There may be in these lines a delicately suggested symbolism. The 'shepheards daughters' bring to 'fayre Eliza, Queene of shepheards all', the charming and well-known flowers of the countryside, flowers in keeping with their lowly stations. It takes all this *chevisaunce* to equal in beauty the 'flos deliciarum', 'flowre Delice', the garden lily or iris, which surpasses the rest as the beauty of Eliza is beyond compare.¹

¹ The wealth of symbolism connected with the fleur de lys is suggested by the following passage on the Virgin Mary:

'Where-fore me penkes þat she may be likened to þe rate [=root] where-of spekeþ Auicenna, 2 Cononis, where he haskeþ what [is] ire [=purple iris] uel ireos, [=white iris] vnde versus:

Iris purpurium florem gerit, yreos album,
Gladiolus crocineum, fert spatula fedita nullum.

Þis clerke answeres and seys þat iris uel yreos is þe rote of þe lilie of heven and som clerkes calleþ itt þe floure de lice, þe wiche hæþ floures and sondree coulours, þat is to sey of whyte, 3alowe, and purpure; and sum bep like to þe firmament. But who is þe rote of þe lilie of heven but þis mayden, [i.e. the Virgin] þat is þe modere of þe Floure of heven? For she hæþ coulours of all floures of heven, for she had like vertewes of all creatures of heven. And þer-fore and þou wolt be chaste, she may helpe þe with þe floure of chastite. And 3iff þou wilt be in charite, she hæþ þe purpure floure of charite.'

The reference is to Avicenna, *Liber Canonis*, ii, 2, i; p. 136 (ed. Venice, 1582). The verses are not in Avicenna, but appear in *Sinonoma Bartholomei*, ed. J. L. G. Mowat, Oxford, 1882.

See *Middle English Sermons* edited from British Museum MS. Royal 18 B. xxii by Woodburn O. Ross, E.E.T.S., 1940, pp. 188 and 359.

The association of the flower with virginity and chastity and the colours white, yellow, purple, and blue is particularly relevant here.

In any discussion about it it is worthwhile remembering E.K.'s note on the word as used in the May Eclogue, l. 92:

Sometime of Chaucer used for gaine: sometime of other for *spoyle, or bootie*, or enterprise, and sometime for chiefdome.

There may also be a hint in the passage quoted of the lines in the November Eclogue:

Where bene the nosegayes that she dight for thee:
The colourd chaplets *wrought with a chiefe*?

To attempt to disentangle the complicated processes of poetic composition would be foolish, but I would suggest that Spenser, in the April Eclogue passage, was thinking of the whole array of flowers worked into the completed head of a nosegay. He had a peculiar fondness for words ending in *-aunce*. Is it beyond the bounds of conjecture that he used *chevisaunce* in this isolated instance not deliberately as a flower name but more generally to cover both the sense of 'flowery spoils' and 'completed nosegay'?

BEATRICE WHITE.

'I SAW YOUNG HARRY'

Dr. Johnson's comment on Sir Richard Vernon's description (1 *Henry IV*, iv, i, 97) of the gallant show made by Henry, Prince of Wales and his companions in arms, strikes the right note:

A more lively representation of young men ardent for enterprise perhaps no writer has ever given.

It is all the more deplorable that textual difficulties have dimmed the ardour, and turned the passage into the student's aversion and the examiner's delight. It deserves a better fate.

All furnisht al in Armes:

All plumde like Estridges that with the wind
Baited like Eagles hauing lately bathd,
Glittering in golden coates like images,
As ful of spirit as the month of May,
And gorgeous as the sunne at Midsomer:
Wanton as youthful goates, wild as young buls,
I saw young Harry with his beuer on,
His cushes on his thighs gallantly armde,
Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat,
As if an Angel drop[t] down from the clouds,
To turne and wind a fiery Pegasus,
And witch the world with noble horsemanship. (Q1)

It may help to re-affirm the ardour, and to set the textual difficulties in a fresh light, if two parallels in Elizabethan literature immediately anterior are studied, one already partially observed, the other (we believe) not

hitherto noted. The difficulties chiefly concern the word 'Estridge', whether it should be taken as ostrich or as goshawk; the word 'Baited', possibly meaning refreshed, probably meaning clapping and fluttering the wings; and finally the provision, by emendation or invention, of a finite verb for the estridge.

The passage in Nashe's *Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) that describes the Earl of Surrey and his tilting-charger has been noticed but hardly enough (ed. McKerrow, vol. II, p. 272). It matters little that it depicts a tilting-horse ridiculously caparisoned and disguised in the form of an ostrich. What does matter is that Nashe is adapting Pliny and Gesner to the sights and the prowess of the tiltyard:

The trappings of his horse were pounced and bolstered out with rough *plumed siluer plush, in full proportion and shape of an Estrich*. On the breast of the horse were the fore-parts of this greedie bird aduanced, whence, as his manner is, hee reacht out his long necke to the raines of the bridle, thinking they had bin yron, and styll seemed to gape after the golden bit, and euer as *the courser did raise or coruet*, to haue swallowed it halfe in. *His wings*, which he neuer useth but running, beeing *spread full saile*, made his *lustie stead as proud vnder him as he had bin some other Pegasus*, & so quiueringly and tenderly were these *his broade winges* bounde to either side of him, that as he paced vp and downe the tilt-yard in his maiesty ere the knights were entered, they seemed wantonly to fan in his face, and *make a flickering sound, such as Eagles doe*, swiftly pursuing their prairie in the ayre.¹

Here we have the plumed Estrich, the wind, the reference to Pegasus, the terms of horsemanship (by a trick of fantasy the artificial ostrich is half treated as the rider), and finally the rapid comparison to eagles. What is lacking here, in spite of the later 'moralising' of the symbol (the lover 'perswaded himselfe he should outstrip all other in running to the goale of glorie'), is the sense of high emprise that Dr. Johnson was quick to feel in Vernon's speech. This may be found, with the added spur of poetic rivalry, in the other parallel, Chapman's *De Guiana carmen Epicum*. After Raleigh's Guiana venture, Lawrence Keymis brought out in 1596 his *Relation of the Second Voyage to Guiana*; prefixed to it was Chapman's poem, over the initials G.C. It is a celebration of a 'worke of honour and eternall name For all the world t'envie, and us t'atchieve'. It sings of 'Riches, and Conquest, and Renowme'; it appeals to

Patrician Spirites that refine
Your flesh to fire, and issue like a flame
On brave indeuours, knowing that in them
The tract of heaven in morne-like glory opens.

As Professor Sir Walter Raleigh wrote of it, the theme is not 'gold, nor the

¹ The italics are ours. It is possible that Nashe is describing some actual tilt seen or read of. According to Hall (*Chronicle*, ed. 1809, pp. 613, 707) Henry VIII twice used as part of a distinctive tilting-badge a dripping ('stilling') watering-pot, such as Nashe has introduced just before the passage quoted with absurd 'arteficiall distillations'.

expected miracle of Virtue rich; it is Patriotism, Honour, and the Faith that will risk all for them' (*The English Voyages*. . . , 1926, pp. 159-60). The final paragraph depicts the Queen sending forth Raleigh to his venture, 'Dismissing him to convoy of his starres', and the nobles escorting him to his fleet:

where round about

His bating Colours English valure swarmes
 In haste,
 And now a wind as forward as their spirits,
 Sets their glad feet on smooth Guianas breast, . . .
 And there doth plentie crowne their wealthie fieldes,
 There Learning eates no more his thriftlesse bookes,
 Nor Valure Estridge-like his yron armes.

Bating, wind, estridge-like; within ten lines of heroic purport the words occur; and it is more than likely that Shakespeare read the poem, if only to see what Chapman was up to now. And this was in the year before that in which *Henry IV* was first acted. If Shakespeare looked further through the prose narrative (and Falstaff's later praise of Mistress Page (*Merry Wives*, I, iii, 76) suggests that he did: 'A region in Guiana, all gold and bounty'), then his eye might well be caught by scattered sentences such as these: 'the *Amapagotos* have images of gold of incredible bignesse, and greate store of unmanned horses of the *Caracas* breed'; or, the Indians 'refused to trade with them for certaine images of golde made with many heades'; or again, 'a Frier . . . brought with him Eagles, idols, and other jewels of golde'.¹ These are just such details as might, after a cursory reading of a recent pamphlet, stick in the mind of a poet who is taking his good where he finds it. The transmutation of all these glittering scraps into the alchemic gold of Vernon's enthusiastic description, with its characteristically rapid transition of metaphor from the plumed ostriches and the wind, to the bated feathers and the eagles, then to golden images, finally the culminating praise of noble horsemanship, and illuminating the whole the sense of springtime brilliance and midsummer pride—all this is only another manifestation of the creative imagination at work.

If Shakespeare's indebtedness is accepted, then one may feel that some light is thrown on the textual difficulties. Estridges here are certainly ostriches, and are not to be taken for goshawks; the very mention of the Prince of Wales would bring the ostrich plume to mind.² Rowe's emendation of 'with the wind' to 'wing the wind' is seen as probable after Nashe's stress (however incorrect) on the broad sail-like wings of the ostrich used when running;³ the structure throughout the paragraph of the end-

¹ Hakluyt, Maclehoose ed., vol. x, pp. 465, 476, 497.

² Plume is the technical term in heraldry for the bunch of three feathers.

³ Cf. Fairbairn's *Crests*, vol. ii, Plate 97, where the ostrich as a heraldic crest is depicted with large and long wings, with strong pinions; one crest shows the bird running with wings raised above the body, much as those of Pegasus are displayed.

stopped lines justifies the avoidance here of a strong run-on to the following line; each metaphor is co-terminous with the line. In addition, Hammer's 'bating' for 'baited' would be supported by Chapman's 'bating colours' used adjectivally for 'fluttering'.

Whether or not these textual difficulties have been lightened, the significance of the simile 'Glittering in golden coates like images' is undoubtedly given a new turn. It is more likely that just then the pagan idols of the New World were in Shakespeare's mind, rather than, as has been suggested, the images of saints in rich vestments.

To Dr. Johnson the passage was valid as a lively representation, in spite of what he suspected to be its textual deficiency. For us now it has the added interest of revealing the working in Shakespeare's mind of memory and association. It no longer seems strange that the image of the estridge should merge into that of the eagle, and that on the instant both should give place to golden idols; and that before Vernon has ended, he has Prince Hal firmly in the saddle on no less a steed than fiery Pegasus. The heroic picture is complete, and in one short but brilliant passage Shakespeare has bettered his rival's fine but unequal poem. Dr. Johnson, as usual, is justified in his claim.

KATHLEEN LEA.
ETHEL SEATON.

DEFOE'S FIRST SEASONABLE WARNING (1706)

A Seasonable Warning or the Pope and the King of France Unmasked (1706)¹ should not be confused with Defoe's *A Seasonable Warning and Caution against the Insinuations of Jacobites and Papists in Favour of the Pretender. Being a Letter from an Englishman at the Court of Hanover* (1712) which James Watson cited as an example of the seditious pamphlets² which issued from the press of Mrs. Anderson. But it seems highly probable that the former pamphlet was also written by Defoe and printed by Mrs. Anderson.³

A Seasonable Warning . . . (1706) opens with a brief statement of the history of Scotland with special emphasis on the progress in friendly relations between England and Scotland. Then the author reminds his Scottish readers that, when 'at the Revolution, we had a fair opportunity of redressing our grievances and procuring good terms with England, we all know by whose means, and for what reasons it was lost'. And he adds, 'if now

¹ *Pamphlets* ³/₈₈₈ a, Nat. Lib. Scot.

² *Watson's Memorial*, printed in *Watson's Preface to the History of Printing 1713*, ed. W. J. Couper (Edinburgh, 1913), p. 76.

³ See my forthcoming paper, *Defoe and his Northern Printers*, P.M.L.A.

when it is under no necessity of grants and condescensions it will yet unite upon such terms as are propos'd, we owe the more thanks to the procurers of them, and will be reckoned fools by our posterity if we should reject them'. For, he contends, the proposed Union will bring about the economic rehabilitation of Scotland, offer greater security to all branches of Protestantism both in England and Scotland, and remove from Scotland the constant threat of war. 'Why then', he asks, 'if a Union promise so much advantage to Scotland are there so many to oppose it?' The opposition, he replies, springs from 'ignorance, envy, malice and French interest'. The pamphlet concludes with a patriotic gesture: 'I shall therefore end this short essay with a sincere design to do my country all the service my private station makes me capable of.'

An examination of the political and economic arguments advanced in *A Seasonable Warning* . . . (1706) suggests that it was one of several efforts by Defoe in 1706 to forward the Union. Noticeable, for example, is the dramatization of the miserable plight of Scotland and the graphic prediction of the desolation which would fall upon the nation should all overtures toward uniting with England come to nought. That several Scottish advocates of Union took a realistic view of the present state of their native land and advised their countrymen to throw in their lot with England is a matter of record. But for the most part they did not dramatize their misfortunes and their pitiable future outside the Union, as Defoe had already done, and as he was presumably doing once more in *A Seasonable Warning* . . . (1706).

And first I say it's to be fear'd a war may ensue betwixt the two nations vastly disproportionate in strength and riches and how fatal that may be to us nobody knows. Everybody will allow Scotsmen to be as brave as any of their neighbours abroad, and when they are in equal terms of number and other necessities for war with their enemies are capable of doing very great things, but in the case I have mentioned, we are at a disadvantage in both. For it would be nonsense to pretend that we are able to maintain so great an army or so great a fleet as they.

And therefore it's next to be fear'd that a prevailing enemy may waste our country, destroy our towns and houses, and interrupt the little trade we have so far, as not to leave us a ship to go from one port to another. Do we not see how much a few French privateers allarm our coasts, and what mischief could not a noble well-manned fleet do to us? Is there a port in Scotland so strongly fortified, as what they have bombarded and laid in ashes? For my part I have such a melancholy dismal prospect of the consequences of a war with England that I think one campaign in our country with a few days of fair wind to carry on their ships may lay our towns in ashes, and put all our sea-ports in a flame, and what curses would not such destruction procure for the opposers of the Union.

It has been frequently observed that Defoe belongs to that small group of English writers who have made the subject of trade both profitable and

entertaining reading. There is an abundance of such writing in *The Review*, in *The Complete English Tradesman*, in certain sections of *A Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* and in several miscellaneous pamphlets including (we may be fairly certain) *A Seasonable Warning* . . . (1706), a few paragraphs from which, dealing with the new outlook for Scottish trade under the Union, I quote below :

Next a communication of trade is made to all parts of the Island and plantations (thereunto belonging), but which cannot but bring a vast advantage to Scotland by the export of all our manufactures and products to a great benefit. Hereby the weakest as well as the strongest of the poor and beggars who throng our streets and burden our families, may find some business whereby to live; all our tradesmen may be kept at work and improve their stocks with more assurance of gain than formerly, having all impediments and hinderances of trade taken off and the assistance of good convoys to guard their ships, and the whole country may be in hopes of daily seeing good fleets coming in and going out of firths and ports.

And nobody doubts but that such a fishery will be made, as may equal it, if not excel that of the Dutch upon our coast. And so much money is already design'd for that purpose, if the Union take effect as will circulate to the benefit of the whole nation, employ so many hands, as none may be idle among us.

But then the advantages of the Union will reach to all corners of the country, for there is no part of it so remote from the sea but may expect to share with the sea towns in the profit; and though in some places where the consumption of it will be greater, the concourse of merchants, and the entry of merchants must be so too; yet there will be a proportionable increase of trade all over the nation. And therefore the inhabitants of Edinburgh have no reason to oppose, but rather to wish for a Union: for what is it they can lose but a few Parliament men once a year and maybe not in seven to live in it. Whereas a Union may bring such trade and traffic about it with such fleets of ships in the Firth as may be of more advantage than a hundred Parliaments.

In the above passages there is strong support for the attribution to Defoe. Evidence of his authorship may be found in the highly optimistic forecast for Scotland after the Union—a Scotland alive with trade and trading and free from poverty and unemployment. As far as I know, Defoe was the one Union pamphleteer who dared envisage such a future for Scotland. Then there is the Defoe interest in merchants, tradesmen and the labouring poor. Here, too, is Defoe's advice to place less emphasis on poor laws and work-houses and more emphasis on providing new opportunities for work, 'whereby the weakest as well as the strongest of the poor and beggars who throng our streets and burden our families may find some business whereby to live'. One more piece of evidence is the author's reply to the citizens of Edinburgh who on patriotic as well as on economic grounds looked with misgivings on the future of their city if and when the Scottish Parliament

¹ See Defoe's *Giving Alms no Charity and Employing the Poor a Grievance to the Nation* (1704); and *Review*, 23 December 1704 (No. 48).

ceased to be. It will be observed that the author of *A Seasonable Warning* . . . (1706), altogether indifferent to the Scotsman's pride in and affection for his native Parliament, offers as compensation for the loss of his venerable institution 'such trade and traffic about it with such fleets of ships into the Firth as may be of more advantage than a hundred Parliaments'. In similar vein Defoe wrote in *A Third Essay at Removing National Prejudice* (1706):

I desire to speak one word to the citizens of Edinburgh. I know it is suggested that the Union shall prejudice this city, as it shall prevent the concourse of your nobility and gentry and consequently the trade of the city.

Shall you lose something of the concourse of your gentry here? Tho I do not grant that neither, be not concerned. You will gain it ten fold in the concourse of strangers. Tradesmen must be sensible of this, and 'tis plain to the meanest capacity, a fleet of ships in your roads, and constant import and export will bring another sort of concourse to the city than ten Parliaments.

The closing paragraphs strengthen the evidence already advanced:

Though I have not the honour to vote in Parliament, yet I have been admitted sometimes into the House where I admired to hear so much huffing and bawling, so much noise and so little reason against the articles then in debate, to hear one¹ in a vision or rhapsody of nonsense talking about Hanibal, Caesar and the ancient heroes of whom he knows little but the names, another transported with a degree of passion inconsistent with good manners, and unbecoming a reasonable man, others pleading much for security of religion and Presbyterian government, who by their practice seem to have little regard for either; which indeed might give me a just prejudice against their arguments as not sufficient to convince reasonable men, but calculated for the mob who have nothing to say but our crown, our sovereign, our ancient kingdom, not considering that all are in a hazard without a Union, and in good exchange and bargain made (to speak in their dialect) for the advantage of the nation by one.

And I would fain ask those who talk so much of the crown what they understand by it. For if they mean the weight of gold in it there will be no great loss; and one hour's good fishing may be worth five hundred as good; besides that I believe nobody covets it, but will be left to the idolizers and ignorant devotees.

I shall therefore end this short essay which I undertake with a sincere design to do my country all the service my private station makes me capable of.

The autobiographical allusions which open and close the passages quoted above offer almost unmistakable clues for the identification of the author. For there can be little doubt that it is Defoe, proud of his part in the Union proceedings, who is here proclaiming to Englishmen and Scotsmen alike: 'Though I have not the honour to vote in Parliament I have been admitted sometimes into the House.' I do not know of any other Union pamphleteer who took such special pains to make known this fact. And we may be almost certain, too, that it is Defoe who is here insisting on his

¹ The reference is to Lord Beilhaven, who made a lengthy speech against the Union in the Parliament House on 2 November 1706. See Defoe's *History of the Union between England and Scotland* (London, 1786), pp. 315-28.

'private station' in a vain attempt to escape the attacks of the anti-Union partisans, who were branding him as one 'who patronized not the best cause but the wealthiest client'.¹ Again, there is the contemptuous reference to Lord Beilhaven's speech. The striking similarity between the author's ridicule of the nobleman's oration and Defoe's *British Vision* (1706) suggests a common authorship, the inspiration for both presumably having been furnished by the Earl of Marchmont's cryptically amusing reply to Lord Beilhaven's lengthy speech: 'Behold he dreamed, but lo! when he awoke he found it was a dream.'² And finally there is the rude and impolitic reference to the crown of Scotland which, I think, most students of Union literature would be inclined to attribute to Defoe.

CHARLES EATON BURCH.

PERCY AND DU HALDE

In his *Survey of English Literature, 1730-1780* (vol. II, p. 88), Professor Elton makes the following statement about Thomas Percy's specimens of Chinese verse:

Percy's specimens of Chinese verse, which came through the French of Du Halde and others, are often happy: this is 'on a person sailing home after a long absence':

The heart, eagerly bent, fleets to the mark, like an arrow.
The bark runneth along the water, swifter than the shuttle
Over the loom of a weaver who is in haste to finish his work.

For the word *fleets* in the first line, we should read *flieth*. It might be supposed that Percy had translated the poem from the French of Du Halde,³ whose *Description de la Chine* was one of the major works of information on China in the eighteenth century. I have been induced to examine Percy's long-neglected *Fragments of Chinese Poetry*, at the end of the fourth volume of *Hau Kiou Chooan or The Pleasing History* (1761). For the poem quoted above, number XIX of the *Fragments*, Percy gives a reference: 'P. Du Halde, 2. 151.'⁴ After consulting the various editions of Du Halde that were available in Percy's time, I found that it was not Percy who translated the verse from the French: the translation had already been in existence for more than twenty years.

Du Halde's *Description de la Chine* was available in at least three editions: the French edition in four volumes folio (1735); the first English translation, entitled *The General History of China*, by Richard Brookes, published by John Watts in four volumes octavo (1736); and

¹ See my note, *Attacks on Defoe in Union Pamphlets*, R.E.S., VI, No. 23 (1930), pp. 318-9.

² Daniel Defoe, *History of The Union* . . . ed. cit., p. 328.

³ So thought Miss Milner-Barry; see R.E.S., II (1926), 53.

⁴ *Hau Kiou Chooan*, IV, 251.

the second English translation, entitled *A Description of China*, by Green and Guthrie, published by Edward Cave in two volumes folio (1738-41).¹ We have evidence that Percy used all of them. Writing to Dodsley on 16 April 1761, Percy says in a postscript: 'I hope you rec'd safe your 4 Vols. of Du Halde 8vo w'ch you were so obliging as to continue for some time in my hands.'² He was obviously referring to Richard Brookes's edition. Yet the edition he used most often and from which he quoted most copiously was Green and Guthrie's *Description of China*. In the Preface to *Hau Kiou Chooan*, he lists twenty-six authorities for his notes, and the first item on the list is Green and Guthrie's folio edition, to which he adds a note:

Although the references are chiefly made to this translation, yet recourse was occasionally had to the grand Paris edition of the original.

And on the first page of *Hau Kiou Chooan* we find a footnote:

See Pere Du Halde's Description of China, in 2 vols. folio, printed for Cave 1738, which is the translation always referred to in the following notes.

It was from this edition (II, 151) that Percy took the verse 'on a person sailing home after a long absence' quoted above. Here is the original translation:

The Heart, when eagerly bent, flies to the Mark like an Arrow.

The Bark glides along the Water swifter even than the Shuttle thro' the Loom
of a Weaver who is in haste to finish his Work.

The close resemblance between this and Percy's version needs no comment.

Percy's collection of Chinese verse is highly miscellaneous, ranging from the most classic to the most popular. And the last piece, an anecdote of the mystic Chuang Tsü, is *not* a poem in the original. Of the twenty-one 'fragments' in the collection, exactly two-thirds³ are taken from Green and Guthrie's Du Halde, almost verbatim. I have compared them with their original translations. The differences are slight and almost negligible. Most frequent are changes for archaism: 'tumbleth' for 'tumbles', 'withereth' for 'withers', 'shineth' for 'shines', 'bindeth' for 'binds', etc. Among the other changes are: 'a limpid water' for 'a clear water', and 'the image of a clear sky' for 'the image of a fine azure sky'. In a few cases Percy's changes, which he made in the interest of diction, are by no means happy: 'intoxicated' for 'fuddled', 'marched' for 'walked', and 'unlawfully acquired' for 'ill-acquired'.

Most of the 'fragments' from Du Halde are quite indifferent as poems in Chinese. And yet some of them, like the one 'on a person sailing home

¹ See Cordier, *Bibliotheca Sinica* (1904-24), I, columns 46 ff.

² Harvard Percy Papers, folder 259, as quoted by V. H. Ogburn, *R.E.S.*, IX (1933), 33.

³ Of the remaining seven 'fragments', one was from Martin Martini's *Sinica Historica* (1659), one from Bayer's *Musaeum Sinicum* (1730), and five from Couplet's *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (1687). Percy gives full documentation.

after a long absence', do possess such 'poetic' flavour as people have come to expect from translations of oriental verse. It is curious how bad verse improves, as good verse loses, in translation! Here are four lines 'on the revolution of families':

These verdant mountains: these lovely meadows:
Were once possessed by families now gone to decay.
Let not the present possessors exult too much:
Others after them may be masters in their turn.

This is Percy's version (*Fragments*, no. XIII), which is identical with Green and Guthrie's except the last word, for which they wrote 'Turns'.¹ Here are three lines 'on an old man killed by accident':

The man disappeared here below, like the moon,
Which towards morning, hurrieth in an instant behind the mountain.
Life is like a lamp, which, the oil failing, goeth out at the third watch.

This version (*Fragments*, no. XVIII) was again taken from Green and Guthrie's Du Halde. Percy made two changes only: 'hurrieth' for 'hurries', and 'goeth' for 'goes'.² Of course, he had arranged Green and Guthrie's prose translations in the form of unrhymed verse.

All this means that credit is due to Green and Guthrie. Most of us who remember Dr. Johnson's casual remarks on these collaborators are not likely to have a very high opinion of their work. Green was an Irishman, and Guthrie a Scot. 'Green said of Guthrie, that he knew no English, and Guthrie of Green, that he knew no French.' They undertook the translation of Du Halde, and made the most amusing blunder—'the twenty-sixth day of the new moon'.³ Nobody, it seems, has ever suspected that their work contains some happy specimens of 'Chinese' verse.

Du Halde's work on China and its translations were often quoted without acknowledgement. They were the sources, as A. L. Sells says, 'où tout auteur, écrivant sur les Chinois, pouvait puiser sa couleur locale sans être accusé de plagiat'.⁴ Goldsmith was one of the many who plagiarized. Percy was more scrupulous. He quotes Du Halde freely in his *Hau Kiou Chooan* and his *Miscellaneous Pieces Relating to the Chinese* (1762), and he is explicit in his reference to the source, chapter and verse. I have checked the fourteen fragments of Chinese verse from Du Halde, and found that the references are exact. But Percy is not always to be trusted. In two cases, at least, he has misled us; or rather we are apt to be misled. The 'Chinese Matron' (in *The Matrons*, 1762) was supposed to be a new translation from the French. But a comparison of the version with Green and Guthrie's shows that it is simply a revised copy. There are omissions, about one-half

¹ *Description of China*, II, 51.

² *Description of China*, II, 159.

³ Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (ed. Hill-Powell), IV, 30. I have not been able to discover this blunder in the *Description of China*; probably it was removed in the final revision of the manuscript.

⁴ *Les Sources françaises de Goldsmith*, 98.

of the verse being left out; there are verbal changes; but the resemblance between the two versions is absolutely unmistakable.

In the Advertisement to 'The Little Orphan of the House of Chao' in the *Miscellaneous Pieces Relating to the Chinese*, we are told that it was translated from Du Halde's French work. And Percy adds a note:

This tragedy has been given twice already in our own language, in two different translations of that book. Without derogating from the merit of these, we beg leave to mention, that we have endeavoured to retain the peculiarities of the Chinese original, with a care and exactness, which the former translators did not always think it necessary to observe.

By 'the two different translations' Percy meant that of Brookes in *The General History of China* and that of Green and Guthrie in the *Description of China*. A careful examination of the two versions together with Percy's shows that Percy followed, quite closely, Green and Guthrie, though occasional reference may have been made to the French version. Again, there are omissions and verbal changes, often made in the interest of idiom and decorum; but there is no evidence whatsoever that he 'endeavoured to retain the peculiarities of the Chinese original', of which he, like most of his contemporaries, does not seem to have had an adequate knowledge.

T. C. FAN.

WORDSWORTH'S LODGING DURING HIS SCHOOLDAYS AT HAWKSHEAD

It has always been supposed that Ann Tyson's cottage, in which Wordsworth lived while attending the Hawkshead Grammar School, was in the village of Hawkshead. There is however good evidence for the view that it was not in Hawkshead at all, at any rate during the greater part of his school days, but in Colthouse, a small group of houses, including a Friends' Meeting House, just off the main road to Sawrey about one-third of a mile to the east of the village. The first item of evidence is to be found in a series of letters written in the early months of 1920 by the late Mrs. Heelis to the late Mr. Gordon Wordsworth and preserved along with Mr. Wordsworth's other papers in Dove Cottage. The occasion of this correspondence was the discovery by Mrs. Heelis of an old ledger, apparently dating from the late eighteenth century and containing amongst other things some of the accounts of the Tyson family. (The ledger is referred to at some length by Mr. Wordsworth in an article on 'The Boyhood of Wordsworth' in the *Cornhill Magazine* for April 1920: it will shortly be presented to the Governors of the Hawkshead Grammar School.) This ledger is not, however, the only topic of the correspondence. Mrs. Heelis was stimulated by her interest in it to investigate the parish registers at Hawkshead; and in the course of the correspondence she records the dis-

covery that though both Ann Tyson and her husband Hugh at the time of their marriage were entered as belonging to 'town' (i.e. Hawkshead), at the times of their deaths (Hugh's in 1784 and Ann's in 1796) they both belonged to Colthouse. And from this discovery she very naturally argues that their cottage was probably at Colthouse for the whole period of Wordsworth's schooldays (1778-1787).

The second item of evidence is to be found in a footnote to *Prelude* IV, 37, in Knight's edition of the *Poetical Works*, published in 1883. Knight of course adheres to the accepted view: indeed his writings are largely responsible for its being the accepted view. But in this footnote he records a statement made to him by the poet's son William to the effect that 'if asked where the dame's house was, he would have pointed to a house on the Eastern side of the valley, and out of the village altogether; his father having taken him from Rydal Mount to Hawkshead when a mere boy and pointed out that spot'. Moreover Knight adds that the spot must have been Colthouse, and speaks of a removal thither. He seems, however, content to assume that the dame's house pointed out by the poet to his son was not the dame's house inhabited by the poet. And since he makes this somewhat questionable assumption, and is in addition unaware of the fact that Hugh Tyson died at Colthouse during the poet's schooldays (his researches into the parish registers, recorded in the same footnote, appear to have been confined to Ann), he is able to suppose that the removal took place at some later time. In any case his adherence to the accepted view remains unshaken; he does not refer to Colthouse in his *Life of Wordsworth* (1889); and though the important footnote is reprinted *verbatim* in the Eversley edition (1896), there is nowhere any evidence of his attitude to its contents having changed. Mrs. Heelis does not mention the footnote; but the correspondence seems to imply that both she and Mr. Wordsworth were aware of the family tradition which it records.

It should be added that the relevant passages in the *Prelude* can refer to Colthouse no less easily, and many of them more easily, than to Hawkshead. Mrs. Heelis's letters contain cogent argument on these and kindred matters: amongst other things she suggests a probable situation for the cottage in Colthouse. Unfortunately the cottage which was there in Wordsworth's time has been pulled down and replaced by an unpleasing modern structure. But the surroundings cannot have changed much; and in all important respects they are what the *Prelude* passages require them to be. Amongst other things, a brook runs 'boxed within the garden' (IV, 50-1), which the Hawkshead brook does not; and the cottage and its neighbours 'stand among pleasant fields' (I, 502-3) in a much more obvious and literal sense than any cottages at Hawkshead.

OLIVER DE SELINCOURT.

CORRESPONDENCE

THE 'YOUTH' OF SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

THE EDITOR,
The Review of English Studies.

SIR,

Your courteous reviewer of my *Shakespearean Gleanings* asks whether I have 'sufficiently considered George Wyndham's careful discussion of the significance of the italicization of *Hews* and *Will* in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*', as supporting the theory that the initials W. H. of Thorpe's dedication may stand for some as yet unidentified William Hews or Hughes, rather than for William Herbert. This theory rests on the seventh line of Sonnet xx. It will be as well to give the whole passage:

A Womans face with natures owne hand painted,
Haste thou the Master Mistris of my passion,
A womans gentle hart but not acquainted
With shifting change as is false womens fashion,
An eye more bright then theirs, lesse false in rowling:
Gilding the obiect where-vpon it gazeth,
A man in hew all *Hews* in his controwling,
Which steales mens eyes and womens soules amaseth.

We do not, of course, know whether the capitals and the rather sporadic italics of the 1609 text are due to Shakespeare himself, or to a scribe, or to the printer. Wyndham's argument is that practically every word which is both capitalized and italicized 'is either a proper name, or else, of Greek or Latin extraction', and that those other than proper names were so printed 'because they were but partially incorporated into the English language'. I think he can hardly have written this with the Oxford English Dictionary before him. Several of the words in question—*Abisme*, *Alcumie*, *Alien*, *Autumne*, *Hereticke*, *Statues*—were already English in the fourteenth century.

But we are really only concerned with *Hews*, which Wyndham takes, rightly or wrongly, as a proper name. If so, it is the only proper name, other than *Will*, so printed in the *Sonnets*. Obviously the line in which it occurs is corrupt. It does not, as it should, and as the lines which precede it do, link grammatically with the 'Haste thou' of the second line. The best emendation, I think, is H. C. Beeching's:

A maiden hue, all hues in his controlling.

He modernizes both 'hew' and '*Hews*', leaving, I suppose, 'his' in the old sense of 'its'. What, then, is the significance of the line? Surely either that the youth's 'hue' ('complexion' or more generally 'appearance') controls ('dominates') the 'hues' of all others, or, if the capital and italics are right, that it dominates Hews or Hughes. But if we take the second alternative, clearly Hughes must be, not the dominating youth himself, but another person.

Yours faithfully,

E. K. CHAMBERS.

REVIEWS

The Vatnsdalers' Saga. Translated with an introduction and notes by GWYN JONES. Princeton: Princeton University Press, for the American-Scandinavian Foundation; London: Humphrey Milford. 1944. Pp. x+158. \$2.00; 13s. 6d. net.

Professor Gwyn Jones has followed his *Four Icelandic Sagas* with this translation of *Vatnsdala*, to which he has prefixed an introduction and added enough notes to clarify the story for readers who have little or no knowledge of Icelandic literature and history. The result is a pleasant and workmanlike volume. Of the translation itself it is difficult to speak with complete enjoyment. There will never be agreement about the style to be used by a translator of sagas: William Morris thought Dasent too homespun; many, including the present reviewer, think Morris too remote from the directness and downrightness of his originals, and to many, again including the present reviewer, Professor Gwyn Jones will seem to strike a too modern note of colloquialism even in the dialogue. The sagas are based on oral tradition, but in their present form they are literary, and it is difficult to justify fully such a rendering as this: "You're a lucky-looking lad!" said he. "And because of mine and your dad's friendship I'm going to invite you home with me for the very best fostering I can manage" (ch. VII—"Hamingjúsamlegr sveinn ertu, ok fyrir vináttu okkar föður þíns þá vil ek bjóða þér heim til mín til slíks fósturs, sem ek kann at veita þér best"). The same colloquialism alternates in the narrative with a slightly mannered style—"It must be told of Thorolf Helskin that at first he dwelt in Forsæludal and had an ill name among men. Thorstein from Hof visited him and told him he'd not permit his living there" (ch. 30—"... var illa kendr af mönnum. Þorsteinn frá Hofi kom til hans, ok kvaðst eigi vilja byggð hans þar"). Neither mode entirely fits the plain dignity of the saga-writer. But these things are to some degree matters of argument.

E. C. BATHO.

Irish Poetry from the English Invasion to 1798. By RUSSELL K. ALSPACH. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1943. London: H. Milford, 1944. Pp. xii+146. 10s. 6d. net.

This book consists of two parts. The purpose of the first is 'to tell the story', to 1798, 'of the poetry written in English in Ireland that can with justice be called "Irish"'. Here Mr. Alspach works afresh over the period covered by Archdeacon Seymour's *Anglo-Irish Literature, 1200-1582* (and if little new emerges it is no fault of his), continues the tale to 1700, and epitomizes the eighteenth century.

The English poetry of the Kingdom of Ireland, taken as a whole, is a most promising field of study because, uncomplicated by Gaelic influences, it affords (amongst other things) opportunities for analysing the Anglo-Irish spirit—particularly in its heyday, the eighteenth century. Mr. Alspach's method, however, is descriptive and enumerative, not broadly interpretative; and moreover, much of what matters in the eighteenth century falls outside his scope. Only the

work of Irishmen or Anglo-Irishmen 'written in Ireland' and 'inspired by Ireland or its people' is to be considered; 'poets who unquestionably belong to English poetry' are to be excluded: 'no end is served in calling Swift, for instance, an Irish poet'; 'Goldsmith in his poetry was English and not Irish'. In thus seeking for poetry in the English language which is Irish and not also English Mr. Alspach is engaged in a very unpromising quest, and one may doubt whether anything considered in this part of his book does not 'unquestionably belong to English poetry'. The tests proposed are of course altogether too restrictive, and outside the eighteenth century they are applied with some latitude. Was Michael of Kildare's 'Swet Iesus, hend and fre' 'inspired by Ireland or its people'? Was Stanihurst's *Virgil*? Was this even 'written in Ireland'? Can the author of *The Irish Hudibras* have been Irish or Anglo-Irish? Yet of course they are all dealt with here. Again, in his attempt to be complete up to 1700 Mr. Alspach includes on pp. 47, 48 a list of titles compiled from Dix's *Catalogue of Early Dublin-Printed Books*: these are almost all elegies or other poems of compliment to the great, from the King downwards, and only in that sense 'inspired by Ireland or its people'. Similar poems by Tate and Swift listed in Dix are, inconsistently, excluded. (Mr. Alspach has not seen the books he lists here; but it may be mentioned that they include work by men not of Irish birth—Stephen Jerome, Alexander Spicer, Lemuel Matthews, and the Anglo-Irish Charles Hopkins—besides poems written in England by Englishmen—Flatman and Stepney—and even prose works—Stephen Jerome's *Ireland's Jubilee*, and F. S.'s *Panegyrick*.)

Plainly Mr. Alspach has been unfair to the eighteenth century in applying his tests to it with a rigour which he does not use elsewhere. It is represented by Laurence Whyte, a handful of poems out of Crofton Croker's collections and Samuel Whyte's *The Shamrock*, two scraps of 'oral literature' cited by Chetwood in his *Tour*, and a mention of Thomas Dermody: treated thus, 'the Irish poetry of the eighteenth century has perhaps even less distinction than the poetry from the invasion to 1700'. Moreover, in dealing with this century Mr. Alspach introduces a new yard-stick: its Irish poets 'were for the most part utterly unoriginal in form or diction'—which is equally true of every previous period of Anglo-Irish poetry. Laurence Whyte receives a page but deserves more conspicuous attention: his 'Essay on Dunning' and 'Parting Cup' are exceptional in their age in catching so faithfully the atmosphere of middle-class Anglo-Ireland. Mr. Alspach, however, is more concerned with the evidence Whyte gives 'of the way in which English styles and influences predominated'. In fact, the main influence upon him is Swift, whom Whyte at any rate accounts an Anglo-Irish poet. Certainly wherever Whyte stands, Swift stands too. And after all, Yeats cannot have been altogether astray when he placed 'Goldsmith and the Dean, Berkeley and Burke' on his own ancestral stair.

The second part is interesting pioneer work. Confining himself to the main tales of the Red Branch and Finn cycles, 'for these are the stories that have meant most to the later Irish writers' in English, Mr. Alspach here tells of their handling by English-writing historians from Campion, Hanmer, and the *Book of Howth* in the sixteenth century up to Sylvester O'Halloran at the end of the eighteenth, and in the translations of Charlotte Brooke and Theophilus O'Flanagan. Mr. Alspach has done useful work in opening up this new field of study and in showing that the 'Celtic revival' of more recent times can trace its origins to such sources and to the interest they evidenced and helped to nourish.

The book is provided with an index and a useful select bibliography.

FITZROY PYLE.

Shakespeare and Jonson. Their reputations in the seventeenth century Compared. By GERALD EADES BENTLEY. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; London: Cambridge University Press. 1945. 2 vols. Pp. viii+149; iv+307. 45s. net.

Dr. Bentley has followed up *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* with a study of Shakespeare and Jonson clearly marking their relative importance in the literature of the seventeenth century. He has carefully sifted such works as *The Shakspeare Allusion Book* of 1932 and the thoroughly unsatisfactory *Jonson Allusion Book* of 1922, weeding out 'allusions which do not allude' such as mere parallel passages, proverbs, or publishing records like title-pages and entries in the Stationers' Register. In a second volume he has printed new allusions which he has himself collected—59 to Shakespeare, 1079 to Jonson—testing them by a rigid standard and putting in clear perspective the contemporary attitude to both playwrights. More Jonson allusions, as he points out, remain to be discovered.

The outcome of his research is to make short work of a current delusion. He proves that, except in the last decade of the seventeenth century, Jonson's reputation as the leading English dramatist was far higher than Shakespeare's. He does this by statistics of the allusions in each decade of the century. Thus, between 1601 and 1610, though Shakespeare had written sixteen plays to Jonson's eight, there are 119 allusions to Jonson and 81 to Shakespeare, and even these include seventeen records of Shakespeare's business and professional activities which lie outside his literary work. No contemporary noticed Shakespeare's death in 1616—a contrast to the fifty-odd tributes poured out on Jonson's death in 1637. In the decade 1621–1630, in which the First Folio appeared, there are 108 allusions to Jonson and only 43 to Shakespeare. Up to 1670 Jonson steadily heads the list, and only in 1681–1690 does Shakespeare attain almost to an equality with him, while in the last decade he surpasses him with 251 allusions against Jonson's 244.

In an illuminating chapter Dr. Bentley then analyses the allusions in twenty-two classes. In the first of these 'the name of the dramatist is used alone as a standard of poetic or dramatic greatness'. Here there is overwhelming evidence of Jonson's pre-eminence. 'In every single decade of the century he is praised more often than Shakespeare, and his total is nearly three times as great.' In contrast with Shakespeare, Jonson's reputation grew in the years after his death, notably in the fourth and seventh decades of the century. But through most of the century Shakespeare's characters are better known. 'This particular aspect of Shakespeare's creative genius', says Dr. Bentley, 'triumphed over the critical standards which generally blinded the men of the time to his superiority.'

The rise of Shakespeare at the end of the century is partly due to Dryden and perhaps even more to the revision of Shakespeare's plays—of *The Tempest*, for instance—to adapt them to the taste of the Restoration and the standards of the theatre. Dr. Bentley dismisses 'the frequent cries of pedantic anguish uttered by modern writers over the mutilation of Shakespeare's text' as naïveté and ignorance. The adapters 'were not vandals'. They revived Shakespeare's reputation and brought his plays back to the theatre.

The comparative popularity of individual characters is significant. Here Falstaff towers over all others with 131 allusions, followed by Othello and Deademona (55 and 45), Brutus (44), and Iago (42). Hamlet with 27 manages to beat Dol Common with 21, but, as 'Dol Common' sometimes merely means

'prostitute' without any reference to *The Alchemist*, her figure is too high. The first of Jonson's characters is really Morose in *The Silent Woman* (18); Face comes next (13). Bobadill is apparently not mentioned. To the Falstaff references I can add one more: in the *Designs of Inigo Jones for Masques and Plays* (ed. Bell and Simpson), no. 214, a description of one of the Brachmani in Davenant's *The Temple of Love*, performed in 1635, 'in a roabe of russet Girt low w^t a great belley like a swoln mā', has a marginal note 'like a S^r Jon fall staff'.

The allusions to individual plays are most instructive. Jonson heads the list with *Catiline* (89), *Volpone* (73), *The Alchemist* (67), *The Silent Woman* (62), *Sejanus* (59), and *Bartholomew Fair* (48). *The Tempest* follows (40), *Othello* (37), and *Macbeth* (34). *Hamlet* ties with *Every Man in his Humour* (25). *Twelfth Night* has nine allusions, but *As You Like it* and *The Merchant of Venice* seem scarcely known. This chimes with William Cartwright's tribute to Fletcher in the Folio of 1647:

Shakespeare to thee was dull, whose best jest lies
I'th ladies' questions and the fools' replies;
Old-fashion'd wit, which walk'd from town to town
In turn'd hose, which our fathers call'd the clown.

Even more suggestive is the attitude of Herrick: when his 'Apparition of his Mistress calling him to Elysium' first appeared in the anthology, *Poems: written by William Shakespeare Gent*, in 1640, he described the ancient classical poets who sit with Homer in Elysium;

Among which synod, crown'd with sacred bays
And flatt'ring ivy, we'll have, to recite their plays,
Shakespeare and Beaumont, swans to whom the spheres
Listen while they call back the former years
To teach the truth of scenes.

Eight years later in the *Hesperides* he re-cast the lines, substituted 'Beaumont and Fletcher' for 'Shakespeare and Beaumont,' and added a reference to *The Maid's Tragedy*. For Jonson there is Robert Burton's tribute in a side-note to *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (2nd edition, 1624, p. 506), where he quotes Catullus' 'Da mihi basia mille, deinde centum' and comments, 'Translated or imitated by M. B. Iohnson Arch-Poet in his 119 Epig.'¹ This was twenty-four years before Herrick's poem in the *Hesperides*, 'After the rare Arch-Poet JOHNSON dy'd'. Throughout the century Shakespeare's plays were esteemed for their acting value, but Jonson's as the work of a master, and his stormy and vigorous personality made a deeper impression and excited more comment than the temperament of the 'gentle' Shakespeare.

Dr. Bentley has performed a signal service in this well-ordered and scholarly book. It is a contribution of the utmost value to a clear understanding of the seventeenth-century outlook on letters. Years ago Matthew Arnold wrote that Shakespeare 'trod on earth unguess'd at'; Dr. Bentley has furnished the evidence for this.

In a careful handling of 3,272 allusions Dr. Bentley has made few mistakes, but it may be pointed out that he has taken over from Mr. Newdigate four spurious poems of Jonson. The poem on oaths (vol. ii, p. 266) is by Sir John Harington; 'Be silent, you still music of the spheres' (p. 267) is by William Strode. The silly epitaph 'Ben Johnson upon his Brother William,' ending 'William Johnson hic mentitur' (p. 268) is not Ben's; he had no brother

¹ A wrong reference: it should be *The Forest*, vi.

William. The epitaph 'upon his Freind Mr. Calvin' (p. 269) is equally unauthentic. Two allusions are misappropriated: John Phillips in 1656 (p. 97) simply transferred to his own poems an excerpt from Drayton's 'Epistle to Henry Reynolds of Poets and Poesy' (1627), and Winstanley on the wit-combats (p. 193) similarly quoted a famous passage of Fuller.

PERCY SIMPSON.

The Theory of the Epic in England 1650-1800. By H. T. SWEDENBERG, Jr. (University of California Publications in English, vol. 15.) Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. Pp. xiv+396.

There was room for a book on the theory of the epic in England, though whether there was quite so much room as the 396 pages of Dr. Swedenberg's volume is doubtful. In comparison with the criticism of some other literary kinds, the criticism of the epic suffers from the fact that very few of the critics were discussing what they had tried to write themselves. Criticism that starts from what someone else has *said* is less likely to interest and instruct than the criticism which comes, usually less portentously, from a writer who is reflecting upon the play or the novel he has just written. Little of Dr. Swedenberg's material is of this second kind. Our only great modern epic poet left no organized criticism of the epic; what Milton thought about epic poetry has to be pieced together (as Dr. Swedenberg observes) 'from scattered and heterogeneous statements'. There are, it is true, Dryden and Pope and Cowper: if they did not write epics they at least translated them. But obviously the translator arrives when the problems have already been faced; he is not responsible for working them out himself, and can only learn at second hand from the success or failure of his author. Dr. Swedenberg's most respectable author-critic is D'Avenant. But from D'Avenant we drop to the level of Ned Howard and Blackmore, and of John Ogilvie, the Aberdonian to whom Johnson addressed his famous remark that the noblest prospect which a Scotsman ever sees is the high road which leads him to England, and who published in 1801 *Britannia: A National Epic Poem, in Twenty Books*. What such men wrote the world has very willingly let die; and even the experience gained from writing several epics did not enable Blackmore to do much more as a critic than pontificate along the traditional lines. Dr. Swedenberg's material, therefore, comes mainly from the pronouncements of men like Dennis and Addison, Johnson and Blair. He gives a clear and well-balanced exposition of their views; the work he set himself to do he has carried out thoroughly and unpretentiously.

His study falls into three sections. In an opening chapter he surveys the development of epic theory in Europe up to 1650. Chapters II-V then carry on the story in much greater detail for English critical theory from 1650 to 1800. But it is for the third section (about one half of the book) that most readers will have reason to be grateful to Dr. Swedenberg. Here he devotes eight chapters to summarizing briefly the critical statements on various aspects of the epic (e.g. 'Fable and Action', 'Machines', 'Language and Versification'), and after each summary he proceeds to illustrate the points made by relevant extracts from the critics themselves. Those extracts, averaging about fifty for each chapter, will give the student of English literature all that he is likely to need on the subject, and will save him (as Dr. Swedenberg would no doubt heartily agree) much laborious and repetitive reading. Dr. Swedenberg has thus given his reader a bird's-eye view of the whole field of epic theory in England, and then invited him to pick up some selected crumbs on the lawn. This is a sensible way of going

about the business, and might well be recommended for other investigations of a similar kind.

JAMES R. SUTHERLAND.

Virginia Woolf. Her Art as a Novelist. By JOAN BENNETT. Cambridge, at the University Press. 1945. Pp. viii + 131. 6s. net.

Mrs. Bennett delineates the objects of her enquiry carefully. 'This book is about Virginia Woolf's vision of human life, and it is about her sense of values, and it attempts to analyse the form of her novels; but nowhere does it analyse the evocative images and flexible rhythms upon which all this depends.' A critic has the right to circumscribe her own field; and perhaps the seductive brilliance, the 'beckoning and summoning' quality of Virginia Woolf's style is apt to usurp too large a share of the reader's—particularly the new reader's—attention, and it is a more timely service to her genius to point out what it is that is 'summoned'.

It is difficult to do justice to this book by a summary of its contents. In her most satisfying novels Virginia Woolf created 'a closely woven pattern in which every part is dependent, for its total effect, upon the rest', and it is in her analysis of this interdependence of parts, in particular cases, that Mrs. Bennett is most illuminating. Here she shows what is perhaps a specially feminine quality in criticism,—an ability to listen quietly and intently to what an author is actually saying without insisting on 'placing' the utterance in relation to too many modern tendencies. The reward of this patience and closeness to the subject is a familiarity with the finer inflections and their significance which a broader method must do without. This is not to say, however, that Virginia Woolf is seen in unnatural isolation from the contemporary world of letters; her work was the fruit of an entirely modern sensibility, and besides the pages which point out her likeness to Keats there are those which distinguish her method from that of Dorothy M. Richardson, which at first sight it so much resembles. For Virginia Woolf is not content to convey what life feels like to the single mind, but must include the impression made by this mind on others, and for this purpose develops a completely objective method and an 'intricate and disciplined form', which enables her 'to move from mind to mind without confusion, to present a diversity of experience in a single design'.

The emergence of this method and form from the still half-traditional earlier novels is fully illustrated. Mrs. Bennett moves backwards and forwards through the handful of books, showing us how the traditional definition of characters gives way to an emphasis on 'the fluidity of the human personality rather than its fixity'; how story disappears in favour of a 'sequence of selected moments', in which the importance of events is no longer their function in a plot but their effect on the consciousness of one or more human beings; and how the experiences of love and of death cease to hold culminating positions and become part of the inwoven texture of human life. In the chapter on *Morals and Values* we are directed to some of the 'positives' and 'negatives' that breathe from books in which there is no explicit philosophy.

The study is written with precision and simplicity and without a taint of egotism. It is very fully and aptly illustrated. It should open the eyes of those who do not know Virginia Woolf and quicken the sight of those who do.

J. M. S. TOMPKINS.

Writers and their Critics. By HENRI PEYRE. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press; London: H. Milford. 1944. Pp. xiv+340. \$3.00; 18s. 6d. net.

Professor Peyre proves, by an abundant selection of examples, familiar and less familiar, that critics have in all ages made mistakes about their contemporaries. Yet he writes in the hope that critics in the future will do better. He gives advice to that end; the critic

should be at all times cognizant of some of the most conventional errors committed by his predecessors; to beware of easy success, of superficial charm; to refrain from damning new works as immoral, morbid, or obscure when they perhaps require a mere readjustment of our comfortable prejudices: above all to look for depth, energy and imaginative intensity.

These are good general sailing orders, but not likely to steer us safely through those uncharted waters, where all our predecessors have foundered. When we have read through the immense variety of misjudgments that Professor Peyre has selected we echo the lines from *East Coker* that he quotes with another intention:

The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility . . .

The book displays a wealth of knowledge and a praiseworthy desire to improve criticism for the sake of the living writer and his public. But, perhaps owing to its origin in the lecture room, it is too undisciplined in thought, form and style to effect its purpose. The following sentence, for instance, might pass in a lecture; but to the reader, its nonsense is apparent:

The refined courtier of Versailles or the well-read Parisian, in 1675 or 1690, asked to name the ten greatest talents of his time, would very probably have mentioned neither Pascal nor La Fontaine, neither La Rochefoucauld, Bossuet nor La Bruyère (neither Mme de Sévigné nor Saint Simon, whose works were then unpublished or not yet written).

It is probable indeed!

Similarly the lecture audience might not notice that at one moment Virginia Woolf's novels are dismissed:

with all their evanescent charm and their frail, dazzling grace, they are ageing even more quickly than did Stevenson's subtly wrought tales.

while at another time Professor Peyre complains that modern critics have produced 'no really first-rate or comprehensive appreciation of her work'. And at yet another she is listed as a 'second-rate talent' along with Galsworthy, Mary Webb, Katherine Mansfield, and Charles Morgan. Whatever be the reader's own estimate of the genius of Virginia Woolf, he cannot agree with the view that she is negligible, and also with the view that the absence of a first-rate appreciation proves the incompetence of modern critics.

In face of such imperfect logic and of such lack of discrimination few readers will persevere through the 313 printed pages. The book can be used as an anthology of bad criticism, but its length and formlessness, as well as the great weight of evidence proving the failure of past and present criticism, defeat the slender hope it offers of better things to come.

The best critical pronouncements of the last forty years will doubtless be those of Gide, Rivière and du Bos, men who wrote only a few, carefully meditated critical articles, but did not set out to be the regular guides to the public through the vast literary output of their day.

writes Professor Peyre. He condemns their pusillanimity and calls insistently for a guide; but, in the face of the mass of evidence of misguidance that he has gleaned, from the sixteenth century to the twentieth, many of his readers will applaud their wisdom.

JOAN BENNETT.

Favourite American Plays of the Nineteenth Century. Edited with an Introduction by BARRETT H. CLARK. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1943. Pp. xxviii+553. \$3.75; 25s. net.

Mr. Clark has here brought together nine plays from the series of volumes containing 'America's Lost Plays', of which he was general editor, and has added a tenth not so far published. These plays were 'lost' in the sense that they had not been published. They represent the repertory of American touring companies in the last century, and were recovered by Mr. Clark and his collaborators from all sorts of theatrical texts. The large collection, then, and this selection from it, give plays that were enjoyed by several generations of American audiences. The theatrical history of the plays in this volume reaches from 1829 down to the days of the early film. The plays are: *Metamora* by John Augustus Stone; *Davy Crockett* by Frank Murdoch; James O'Neill's version of Charles Fechter's *Monte Cristo*; *Flying Scud* by Dion Boucicault; *The Banker's Daughter* by Bronson Howard; *My Partner* by Bartley Campbell; *A Trip to Chinatown* by Charles H. Hoyt; *The Great Diamond Robbery* by Alfried and Wheeler; *The Heart of Maryland* by David Belasco; *The Mighty Dollar* by Benjamin E. Woolf.

These plays are neither great nor good, but they are excellent illustrations of popular taste. Here in tragedy, comedy and melodrama we can see how American audiences wished to see themselves and other peoples: the ideal types of virtue and vice, of husband, girl and lover; the occasions thought appropriate for emotional conflicts; the narrative patterns that gave opportunities to approve, to condemn, and to be uplifted. Some of the texts are also rich in details of properties and sets and acting directions.

One suggestion may be made. Is it possible that the tragedy *Metamora* was originally, at least in part, written in blank verse? We know that falsely eloquent prose of this period could easily slide into iambic pentameters. In *Metamora*, however, this happens suspiciously often. One could also argue plausibly that the verse prologue—printed here for the first time—with its references to the author as a 'bard' and the implication that he is entering Shakespeare's field leads us to expect a high poetic drama.

Altogether this is a volume admirably designed to entertain and to instruct.

D. J. GORDON.

Essays and Studies. By Members of The English Association. Vol. XXIX. Collected by UNA ELLIS-FERMOR. Oxford at the Clarendon Press. 1944 (for 1943). Pp. 100. 7s. 6d. net.

The first of the six papers in this volume is Sir Herbert Grierson's Deneke Lecture 'with some modifications', given at Lady Margaret Hall in February 1941. It is entitled 'Criticism and Creation: Their Interactions'. Sir Herbert says that the general view of a critic to-day is that he is the interpreter of the work of creative artists to less appreciative readers, and he quotes Hazlitt's dictum: 'It is a very good office one man does another when he tells him the manner of his being pleased'. He goes on to discuss the function of criticism as conceived by critics in the past, who considered they derived much of their authority from

Aristotle. So far as the critics had any effect it was on the French, rather than on the English drama. Even *Sejanus* and *Cataline* 'do not much resemble a tragedy by Corneille or Racine'. Sir Herbert passes on to *Paradise Lost* and asks whether it was 'altogether a wise choice to adopt a form taken from without, at the dictation of critical theory and classical models'. Milton was the last great poet whose work was influenced by the neo-classical doctrine, for, as Sir Herbert says, by the time of Rymer it had become something to which respect was nominally paid, but which had 'no practical influence because there was no great tragic or epic poet'.

In illustration of the abstract nature of all definitions, when applied to works of art, Sir Herbert contrasts lines from *Hudibras* and 'The Eve of St. Mark'. Though in the same 'metre', the effect is, of course, entirely different. Sir Herbert warns the critic of tendencies against which he should fight—though admitting they are invincible—prejudice, dogmatism and the wish to pontificate. After referring to Mr. Eliot, Mr. Leavis, and Mr. Herbert Read, perhaps rather unfairly in the same sentence, and questioning the validity of Mr. Richards's hope that criticism will some day become scientific, he concludes by expressing his belief that criticism 'will always represent the reaction of this or that individual mind or the mind of a period, Jacobean, Victorian, to a work of the imagination, and it will be, as with the mean in the sphere of morals, "as the wise man would pronounce"'.

Professor C. L. Wrenn gives us what he calls the *disiecta membra* from the results of a more serious study of *The Shepheardes Calender* which the paper restrictions do not allow him to publish in full. He wonders if his 'relative failure to enjoy the *Calender* as poetry is due to the fact that I have very much enjoyed prying into the quality and origin of many of its words'. I believe that Professor Wrenn need not feel uneasy. Is the *Calender* more than mildly pretty verse which has comparatively little value for us? However this may be, his examination of the flower-passage in the April Eclogue, and the fable of the Fox and Kid in the May Eclogue, is of real interest, especially perhaps in their relation to passages in poets before and after Spenser. It is not easy to summarize an article which deals largely with philology. I must content myself by saying that it contains much information on such subjects as the Elizabethan Chaucer canon, and the meaning of the term 'northern' as applied to words.

In 'Shakespeare and Rhetoric' Miss G. D. Willcock discusses the significance of rhetoric to 'a word- and figure-loving generation'. This would be a somewhat dry subject if it had not practical application to the understanding of Shakespeare at the present day. Miss Willcock points to the contrast between Chaucer and Shakespeare. She compares the former's

But sodeynly bigonne revel newe,
Til that the brighte sonne lost his hewe,
For thorizonte hath refte the sonne his lyght—
This is as much to seye, as it was nyght.

with some lines in 2 *Henry VI*, iv, i

The gaudy, blabbing and remorseful day
Is crept into the bosom of the sea . . .

and remarks that 'Chaucer, having blown his little bubble of amplification, pricks it; the Elizabethan does not'. Miss Willcock goes on to notice the use of rhetoric in *Troilus and Cressida* and *Measure for Measure*. It is in the latter play that it is of most significance. Most people, I suppose, feel uncomfortable over Isabella. Much ink, as Miss Willcock says, has been expended on the 'characters'

of Isabella and the Duke. The play, she says, 'stands poised between the Elizabethan and the Jacobean'. She emphasizes the necessity of regarding many of the speeches as rhetoric, not in the sense of the purple passage, but as the attempt by Shakespeare to strike 'the right forceful note' so that at any given place he could 'count on the collaboration of his audience'. This view saves us from the necessity of regarding the play as an organic whole.

In 'Charles Lamb and the Elizabethan Dramatists', Dr. Boas considers Lamb's approach to the early drama. It was, of course, materially different from ours. This is strongly marked in what we should, no doubt, consider Lamb's lack of appreciation of *Tamburlaine*. Several of Lamb's comments are of their period. Lamb, as Dr. Boas says, understood the plays of the Stuart age better than those of the Tudor. He showed his critical sense in assigning the first two scenes that he quotes from *The Two Noble Kinsmen* to Shakespeare, and the third to Fletcher. Dr. Boas, following Dr. G. E. Bentley, reminds us that however much is owing to Lamb, John Cotgrave forestalled him in his *Treasury of Wit and Language* (1655), which is the first 'anthology entirely from English plays'.

Mrs. Evelyn Simpson contrasts the 'comic genius of London' as depicted by Ben Jonson and Dickens. Dickens, who was fond of theatricals and played the part of Bobadil in amateur performances, may have been influenced by Jonson. But Jonson, as Mrs. Simpson says, 'is more of a realist than Dickens, he is harder, fiercer, less humane'. Mrs. Esdaile writes on 'Ben Jonson and the Devil Tavern'. She mentions its continued existence into the eighteenth century. Dr. Percy Simpson wrote an article with a similar title in *The Modern Language Review*, July 1939.

HUGH MACDONALD.

SHORT NOTICES

English Translations from the Spanish—1484-1943. A Bibliography. By REMIGIO UGO PANE. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. 1944. Pp. vi +218. \$2.50.

'The purpose of this bibliography is to make available . . . a reference list of all, or nearly all, translations of peninsular Spanish literature and history into English from the year 1484, in which William Caxton translated and printed Ramón Lull's *The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry*, up to 1943.'

Translations:—In the case of Cervantes this is specifically made to cover 'adaptations'. But similar instances are included under other authors.

Spanish:—The Caxton book mentioned is from the Catalan; so are entries under Anzias March, Maragall, Verdaguer. Portuguese is represented by Gil Vicente (some entries) and Melo. There is a sprinkling of Latin works, e.g. under Vives and Servet. The odds are that translations of Gil Blas are from Lesage's original, not from Isla's version.

Literature and History:—Room is found for technical works on medicine, mining, and navigation.

'There are a number of partial and selective bibliographies in this field, the longest of which has 517 entries. The present work includes 2,682 items.'

It must be noted that a large number of these refer to single poems. Much labour must have been involved in digging them out from miscellanies and magazines. On the other hand there is no mention of certain translations of books by well-known authors listed in the B.M. Catalogue, which the compiler presumably consulted.

Not, perhaps, a model of exact bibliography, but a useful book of reference.

J. R. CAREY.

Hazlitt in the Workshop. THE MANUSCRIPT OF 'THE FIGHT'. Transcribed with Collation, Notes and Commentary. By STEWART C. WILCOX. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press; London: Humphrey Milford. 1943. Pp. xi+94. \$1.50; gr. 6d. net.

The Morgan Library holograph of 'The Fight' is presented in a line-by-line transcript and studied in the light of first-hand testimony regarding Hazlitt's compositional habits. Being both draft and printer's copy, it shows Hazlitt in the successive stages of composition, revision, and (by collation with the printed text) proof-correction. His thoroughness in revision and correction is greater than is generally realized; many important alterations were also made while composing. Mr. Wilcox summarizes: 'Although he made several proof-alterations in diction and expression, nearly all of the alterations in which he reveals his uncanny sense of English idiom and his feeling for effective phraseology were made as he wrote or revised the MS itself.' Perhaps Mr. Wilcox exaggerates the number made in actual composition; his list (pp. 83-5) contains many examples that may have been made in after-revision, for they appear above the deleted words in the transcript. Material from the long erased passages, in which Hazlitt speaks his 'complaint of Love' for Sarah Walker, was used *verbatim* in the *Liber Amoris* written soon afterwards. This throws light on the extent to which Hazlitt allowed his temperament to dominate his subject-matter and lead him into wide-ranging digression, as well as on his confessed habit as a journalist of using the same passage more than once.

Mr. Wilcox calls the manuscript 'the only existing autograph of an important essay by Hazlitt' and treats it as if it were a solitary survivor. He dismisses the Goodyear MSS. in an oblique reference in a footnote, although they are declared on good authority to include autograph essays by Hazlitt, and might in consequence be deemed specially relevant to such a study as this.

J. P. CURGENVEN.

Professor Longfellow of Harvard. By CARL L. JOHNSON. Eugene, Oregon: Oregon University Press. 1944. Pp. xii+112. \$1.00.

This is a study of Longfellow's academic life from his appointment as Smith Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard in 1834 to his resignation in 1854: a careful study of minutiae, of the internal running of the department, of Longfellow's relations with the Presidents of the College, and so on. Every step is documented. Mr. Johnson has gathered up every fragment of material that is conceivably relevant to his subject, and, too often, scraps that would have been better left in the waste-paper basket. I cannot think that any useful purpose is served by the publication of three notes that passed between Longfellow and President Everett about an unsatisfactory stove in a lecture room. The one interesting question, What was the drift of Longfellow's teaching? is passed over in an inadequate chapter.

D. J. GORDON.

SUMMARY OF PERIODICAL LITERATURE

BY KATHLEEN TILLOTSON

DURHAM UNIVERSITY JOURNAL, Vol. 37, No. 3, June 1945—

Modern editions of Bede (W. Levison), pp. 78-85.

E.L.H., Vol. 12, No. 1, March 1945—

The Romantic movement: a selective and critical bibliography for the year 1944 (Charles Frederick Harrold), pp. 1-34.

Marlowe's 'imperial heaven' (Francis R. Johnson), pp. 35-44.

Sentimentalism in Lillo's *The London Merchant* (George Bush Rodman), pp. 45-61.

Shelley and the Reformers (Kenneth Neill Cameron) pp. 62-85.

MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES, Vol. 60, No. 4, April 1945—

Hazlitt and Malthus (William Price Albrecht), pp. 215-26.

Lytton Strachey's revisions in *Books and Characters* (Charles Richard Sanders), pp. 226-34.

Some debatable words in *Pearl* and its theme (Sister Mary Vincent Hillman), pp. 241-8.

Modern textual corruption in MS. Cambridge Additional 3470 (Ramona Bressie), pp. 248-54.

'Hudibras' Butler abroad (Norma E. Bentley), pp. 254-9.

Swift and Sir William Temple—a conjecture (Arthur E. Case), pp. 259-65.

Early criticism of Pope's 'Night-piece' (Alfred C. Ames), pp. 265-7.

Dr. Johnson and Blair's sermons (Robert M. Schmitz), pp. 268-70.

Keats and Coleridge: *La Belle Dame sans merci* (Mary Rebecca Thayer), pp. 270-2.

Wordsworth's 'travelling cripple' (Autrey Nell Wiley), pp. 272-3.

Identified as Samuel Horsey.

A note on the *Spectator* 459 (Kathryn Davis), p. 274.

Correspondence: Tennyson and Persian poetry once more (W. D. Paden), p. 284.

See *M.L.N.*, Vol. 57, pp. 83-92; Vol. 58, pp. 652-6.

Correspondence: Anglo-Latin *Buzones* (Leo Spitzer), pp. 285-6.

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The Faire Maide of Bristow (1605), another Bad Quarto (Leo Kirschbaum), pp. 302-8.

An incipient libel suit involving Poe (William Henry Gravely, Jr.) pp. 308-11.

The sources of Poe's 'Eldorado' (Thomas Ollive Mabbott), pp. 312-4.

Notes on British Solomon Islands Pidgin (Robert A. Hall, Jr.), pp. 315-8.

Chaucer's Madame Eglantine (E. P. Kuhl), pp. 325-6.

A note on Lyly's *Midas* (Don Cameron Allen), pp. 326-7.

The authorship of *The Fatal Extravagance* (Paul S. Dunkin), pp. 328-30.

An unpublished Shelley letter (David Lee Clark), pp. 330-3.

To Charles Ollier, August 10, 1818; references to *Rosalind and Helen* and to Keats's *Endymion*.

Baron von Gumpenberg, Emily Foster, and Washington Irving (Walter A. Reichart), pp. 333-5.

Francis Quarles and Henry D. Thoreau (Ernest E. Leisy), pp. 335-6.

Was Henry Kirke White a victim of the Review press? (William S. Ward), pp. 337-8.

Sources of Mill's criticism of *Pauline* (C. N. Wenger), p. 338.

Correspondence: John Donne and Valeriano (Thomas O. Mabbott), p. 358.

See *M.L.N.*, Vol. 58, pp. 610-12.

NOTES AND QUERIES, Vol. 188, April 21, 1945—

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Shakespeare's signature in Lambarde's *Archiaonomia* (Frank Caldiero), pp. 162-3.

May 5—

Prester John. Sources and illustrations (Malcolm Letts), pp. 178-80.

Continued, *N. & Q.*, May 19, pp. 204-7; June 16, pp. 246-8; June 30, pp. 266-8; concluded, July 14, pp. 4-7.

An unassigned Defoe pamphlet in the Defoe-Clark controversy (Charles Eaton Burch), pp. 185-7.

Diana of the Crossways and the wonderful old quarto (C. L. Cline), pp. 187-9.

Identified as Lord Monboddo's *Antient Metaphysics*.

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The fourteener in translation (George G. Loane), pp. 200-2.

Yeats and Hopkins (R. G. Howarth), pp. 202-4.

June 2—

John Gibson Lockhart as ogre (the 'ventilation' of David Boswell Reid) (Alan Lang Strout), pp. 228-30.

June 16—

A Discourse concerning the Union. An unrecorded Defoe pamphlet? (Charles Eaton Burch), pp. 244-6.

Some fresh notes on the Royal West London theatre in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Gerald Morrice), pp. 250-2.

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Extracts from letters from Joseph Spence, 1739-62 (P. D. Mundy), pp. 252-5.

Concluded, *N. & Q.*, June 30, pp. 271-3.

Obituary: George G. Loane, (V.R.), pp. 263-4.

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Further notes on Defoe's sources for *Robert Drury's Journal* (John Robert Moore), pp. 268-71.

Some unpublished letters of John Gibson Lockhart to John Wilson Croker (Alan Lang Strout), pp. 278-81.

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Five miscellaneous notes on juvenile drama. A note on Lines Bros., Ltd. (Charles Dewhurst Williams), pp. 12-13.

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Reply to query by J. G. Dunlop, June 2, p. 237.

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Notes on Gothic morphology (Albert Morey Sturtevant), pp. 1-9.

Virgil and the *Gawain*-poet (Coolidge Otis Chapman), pp. 16-23.

More sources of Rastell's *Interlude of the Four Elements* (Johnstone Parr), pp. 48-58.

Shakespeare's cousin, Thomas Greene, and his kin: possible light on the

Shakespeare family background (Rupert Taylor), pp. 81-94.

Shakespeare's 'Harke, Harke, ye Larke' (Willa McClung Evans), pp. 95-101.

Milton's prose vocabulary (Joshua H. Neumann), pp. 102-120.

Defoe and his northern printers (Charles Eaton Burch), pp. 121-8.

Shaftesbury and the test of truth (Alfred Owen Aldridge), pp. 129-56.

'Particular character': an early phase of a literary evolution (Houghton W. Taylor), pp. 161-74.

Lockhart to Croker on the *Quarterly* (John D. Kern, Elisabeth Schneider, Irwin Griggs), pp. 175-98.

Unique and repeated situations and themes in Reade's fiction (Emerson Grant Sutcliffe), pp. 221-30.

Browning: semantic stutterer (Stewart W. Holmes), pp. 231-55.

Clio's rights in poetry: Browning's *Cristina and Monaldeschi* (C. N. Wenger), pp. 256-70.

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